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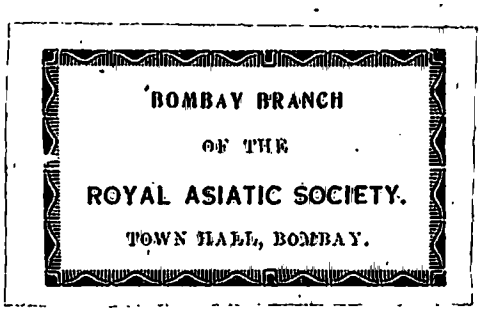

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HISTORY OF INDIA

UNDER QUEEN VICTORIA

FROM 1836 TO 1880.

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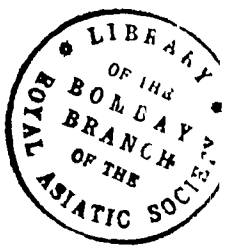
BY

APTAIN LIONEL J. TROTTER
R OF "WARREN HASTINGS," "STUDIES IN BIOGRAPHY," ETC.



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BOOK I.

LORD AUCKLAND AND LORD ELLENBOROUGH.

1836—1844.

HISTORY OF INDIA UNDER QUEEN VICTORIA.

To the Memory

OF ONE

WHO, DURING TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS,

PROVED HERSELF

A LOVING WIFE, A TRIED HELPMATE, AND A TRUE FRIEND,

THESE PAGES,

WRITTEN DURING HER LIFETIME,

ARE DEDICATED BY

HER SORROWING HUSBAND.

PREFACE.

THE following pages treat of a period in our Indian history of which no connected account on a like scale has hitherto been published. They present in fact a concise, yet full and careful, narrative of events in India from the first days of Lord Auckland down to the last of Lord Lytton; that is, from 1836 to 1880, or, in other words, from the eve of the first to the close of the last Afghán War.

The history of these forty-four years is in many ways the most eventful and important in the whole history of our Indian rule. A mere glance at the contents of these volumes will suffice to show the truth of this statement. There are not a few still living to whom the events here described are matters either of personal experience or of contemporary knowledge. Many of them will, no doubt, be tempted to refresh their memories in the act of fighting their battles o'er again. But I would fain hope that a much larger class of younger men will find their interest and advantage in following the record of those great achievements in peace and war, to which, in these pages, I have tried to do justice, so far as it lay within my scope and means, without respect of persons or parties. They would learn, among other things, how much their countrymen in India have done or attempted for the people among whom their lot was cast; how nobly, on the whole, they wrought and suffered during the great crisis of 1857; and how far they have since succeeded in carrying out the kindly purposes of the Royal Proclamation of 1858.

Books upon Indian subjects are seldom popular in this country. Nothing short of a miracle, a great Indian Mutiny, or a new

Macaulay, will usually tempt the bulk of my countrymen to read through a volume of Anglo-Indian history, however full of stirring incidents and noteworthy deeds. Perhaps the historians themselves are in some degree to blame; but so it is. I have tried to make these volumes as readable as I could, with due regard for the reader's patience, the laws of perspective, and the demands of historic truth. It remains for the public to judge how far the attempt has prospered.

A former history of mine, published some twenty years since, covered part of the same ground as this. But the present, though partly based upon the former, claims to be entirely a new growth, not a mere enlargement of the old design. The authorities on which it is founded are generally indicated at the foot of each page.

The spelling of proper names usually follows the system now largely adopted by the Indian Government. But names so well known as Calcutta, Cawnpore, Meerut, etc., have been left unaltered.

In conclusion, I would offer my heartiest thanks to all who so readily gave their names as subscribers to these volumes, before they had yet been placed in the printer's hands.

L. J. T.

Blackheath,
August, 1886.

CONTENTS.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE
RETROSPECTIVE 3

CHAPTER II.

THE EVE OF WAR 19

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST AFGHÁN WAR 34

CHAPTER IV.

THE BURSTING OF THE AFGHÁN BUBBLE 48

CHAPTER V.

THE LAST ACT OF THE AFGHÁN DRAMA 71

CHAPTER VI.

SIND AND GWÁLLÁR 88

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST SIKH WAR . . . . . PAGE 107

CHAPTER II.

INDIA UNDER LORD HARDINGE 132

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD ORDER AND THE NEW 154

CHAPTER IV.

THE OUTBREAK AT MULTÁN 168

CHAPTER V.

THE SECOND SIKH WAR 187

CHAPTER VI.

CONQUEST OF THE PANJÁB. 212

CHAPTER VII.

INDIA UNDER LORD DALHOUSIE 230

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VICTORIES OF PEACE 256

CHAPTER IX.

THE SECOND BURMESE WAR 283

CHAPTER X.

DALHOUSIE'S ANNEXATIONS 303

CHAPTER XI.

LAST RENEWAL OF THE COMPANY'S CHARTER 323

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE
THE PERSIAN WAR 337

CHAPTER II.

THE GREASED CARTRIDGES 352

CHAPTER III.

THE PANJÁB AND THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCES 375

CHAPTER IV.

PROGRESS OF MUTINY 397

CHAPTER V.

FROM CALCUTTA TO CAWNPORE 418

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST RELIEF OF LUCKNOW 442

CHAPTER VII.

THE CAMP BEFORE DELHI. 467

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FALL OF DELHI 491

INDIA UNDER QUEEN VICTORIA.

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CHAPTER I.

RETROSPECTIVE.

When the young Princess Victoria came to the throne of England on the 20th June, 1837, British India was still ruled by the servants of that great merchant company which traced its origin to the last years of Queen Elizabeth. It was in December, 1600, that a chartered body of English merchants trading to the East Indies started on that career of peaceful-seeming enterprise, which ended in the conquest of a territory almost as large and populous as all Europe. Their modest capital of £75,000 enabled them to fit out five vessels, which in due time Captain Lancaster brought home laden with goods from Java and Sumatra, and with booty captured from the Portuguese. Those were the days when every trader in Eastern seas fought as it were for his own hand, with small regard for the rights whether of rival traders or of the people with whom he sought to do business. To bring home a rich cargo by fair means or by foul, and to coerce or outwit all who stood in their way, was the principle which the servants of the East India Company seemed content to follow for many years to come. In this, be it remembered, they did but reflect the bold, eager, violent spirit of their own age.

Some years of mingled trade and fighting elapsed before our countrymen gained their first secure footing on Indian ground. Jalál-ud-din Akbar, the greatest and wisest of India's Moghal Emperors, closed his long reign in 1605. Five years later his son Jahángir gave Captain Hawkins leave to establish an English factory at Surat, an old port on the western seaboard near the mouth of the Tápti, about a hundred and eighty miles to the

north of Bombay. Not till after some more fighting with the Portuguese did the Imperial edict, as renewed in 1613, translate itself into an accomplished fact. Thenceforth till near the close of the same century, Surat continued to be the headquarters of English trade and influence in the East.

From time to time new settlements sprang up here and there along the Indian seaboard. In 1639 the factory at Armagaum was removed further northward to Madras. In 1644,* thanks to Dr. Boughton's successful cure of Shah Jahán's daughter, the Company were allowed to set up factories within the mouth of the Húghli, and to carry on free trade with the rich and populous province of Bengal. In 1651 they gained a footing at Húghli, some miles above the future capital of British India. To their Bengal trade in silks and cottons was erelong added a brisk trade in saltpetre, for which their new factory near Patna on the Ganges became the mart. In 1668 the island of Bombay, with its noble harbour, passed into the Company's hands from those of its new possessor, Charles II. At Chatanatti, in 1690; Job Charnock founded the modest settlement which, after some strange turns of fortune, grew into the Calcutta of Clive and Warren Hastings. During the twenty years that followed the Restoration of Charles II., in spite of a Dutch war, of quarrels with Moghal Nawábs, of attacks from plundering Maráthas, of strong and jealous rivals from all parts of Europe, the profits of the Company's Indian trade rose from a hundred thousand to a million pounds a year.

Then followed a season of untoward warfare, provoked by the aggressive policy of Sir Josiah Child, the Chairman of the Company, who found an active helpmate in his brother, Sir John. An unequal contest with the might of Aurangzib, the last great emperor of Bábar's line, brought the Company's fortunes in 1690 to a very low ebb. But Aurangzib had no mind to push too far his quarrel with the turbulent traders, who helped to increase his revenues, and revenged themselves at a pinch by blockading his ports and seizing vessels laden with merchandise or with pilgrims bound for Mecca. When his opponents sued for peace, he was ready to grant it on payment of a moderate fine. In 1690 the Company regained their forfeit factories, and were allowed to trade with the Emperor's subjects as freely as before.

During the next fifty years their servants in India kept clear of all wanton embroilments with the native powers. The plague

* This appears to be the true date, as given by Broome in his "History of the Bengal Army."

of "interlopers," who traded with or without a licence in Indian ports, continued to vex them for some years longer, and a rival Company brought down the prices of Indian wares at home. But the first year of Queen Anne's reign saw the two companies finally merged into one, whose sole aim for many years afterwards was to increase its dividends by peaceful means, amidst the clash of arms on both continents, and the busy rivalry of French, Dutch, and other European traders in the East. Guarded by the guns of Fort William, the new settlement at Calcutta grew and prospered in spite of the annoyances sometimes offered by Moghal Viceroys in Bengal, and of the raids of those ubiquitous Maráthas who were already tearing in pieces the wide empire of Akbar and Aurangzib. While Marlborough was beating the French in Flanders and on the Rhine, while George II. was adding at Dettingen to the laurels he had won at Oudenarde, the fortified factories along the Indian coast and far up the rivers of Bengal, became the seats of a steadily growing trade, and furnished a safe shelter to thousands of natives from the greed or the tyranny of their own countrymen.

But all this was altered by the issues of the war which broke out in 1744 between France and England, and threatened for a time to drive the English factors out of all their settlements in Southern India. After the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1749, the English in India, following the example of their French rivals, began to drill their own Sepoys, to increase their armaments, and to interfere for their own ends in the quarrels of the neighbouring princes. During the wars which followed the death of Nizám-ul-Mulk, founder of a great kingdom in the Dakhan still ruled by his descendants, the soldiers of the rival French and English companies were always to be found fighting on opposite sides, in behalf of rival claimants for the thrones of Haidrabád and the Carnatic. Ere long the fight for empire thus begun from Madras and Pondicherry, was taken up by Clive and his successors in Bengal. When the hero of Arkot had become the victor of Plassy, and the horrors of the Black Hole had been requited by the overthrow and death of Suráj-ud-daula, when the British flag waved over Chandanagar and the Dutch at Chinsura had been driven to sue for peace, when Knox and his hardy warriors had rescued Patna, and chased the new Moghal Emperor, in 1760, across the borders of Bahár, then it was that Colonel Robert Clive, the Governor of Fort William, knew himself virtual master of the largest and richest province in the

Moghal Empire. The capture of Pondicherry in the beginning of 1761 crowned the series of achievements which, in less than four years, transformed a company of peaceful merchants into a great political power. From that time forth the countrymen of Dupleix and Lally strove in vain against the destiny which led their English rivals up the path of empire in the East.

Within ten years after the Black Hole tragedy the East India Company had dictated terms to half the princes of India, had seen Shah Alam, the Moghal Emperor, stoop to receive a pension at their hands, and had thwarted the Marátha League in all their efforts to retrieve the great disaster of Pánipat.* Clive himself, however, would not, even if he could, forecast the future which awaited his countrymen. To the Court of Directors he declared his "resolution and hope" always to confine their possessions to the provinces already won for them. To go any farther was "a scheme so extravagantly ambitious that no government in its senses would ever dream of it."

To be content with what he had and to govern justly, was the burden of his letters home during the two years of his second administration. The Company also were of the same mind. For some years Clive's successors adhered to the policy thus laid down. Even Warren Hastings, the first and perhaps the greatest of our Indian Governors-General, crowned his long, stormy, and successful career with the addition only of a few hundred square miles to the Company's realm. But events always proved too powerful for the best-disposed body of directors and the most upright, moderate, or compliant of Governors-General. Once launched on the eddying sea of Indian politics, once drawn into the treacherous current of state relations with neighbouring powers, the Company found itself no longer free to follow its own good counsels, come what might. London and Calcutta were so far apart that the answer to a letter sent from either place to the other was seldom received within the year. The supreme Government at Calcutta wielded an imperfect, an oft-disputed sway over the Governments of Bombay and Madras. Between Calcutta and each of the minor capitals communication was slow and uncertain. Hastings himself could do little to arrest or mitigate the mischief due to official cowardice, rashness, or mis-

* The battle of Pánipat, fought in 1761 by the Maráthas against the Moghals and Afghans under Ahmad Shah, broke the rising power of the former, and weakened instead of saving the Moghal Empire; thus paving the way for the English conquest of India.

understanding at Madras and Bombay. In his own council he was long thwarted and overruled by colleagues strong in the support of powerful friends at home. The Court of Directors were not seldom divided against themselves, and behind the Court stood the Ministers of the Crown and a large body of East Indian Proprietors, whose views and wishes often clashed with the policy upheld in Leadenhall Street. Nor was it strange that a company engaged in the twofold business of trade and statecraft, should be driven sometimes to adapt its public policy to its commercial needs.

"Thus far and no farther," may the Directors have thought when Clive, in 1757, secured for the Company full lordship over a few districts of Bengal. "Thus far and no farther," Clive himself thought when, in 1765, the Emperor of Delhi bestowed upon his English friends the sovereignty of Bengal, Bahár, Orissa, and the Northern Sarkhars. "Thus far and no farther," was the cry repeated again and again as one province or district after another fell by war or treaty into the same hands. Hastings might be censured by his masters and impeached by Parliament for his dealings with Native princes; but Banáras somehow became a province of British India, and Champion's victory over the Rohillas led by easy and progressive stages to Dalhousie's annexation of Oudh. A grievous famine in Bengal, and the growing pressure of their debts at home, impelled the Company in 1772 to "stand forth as Dewan" of their own province, and to replace with their own servants the Native officers who had hitherto governed the country in the name of a titular Nawáb. While the Directors were inveighing against "the rage for negotiations, treaties, and alliances," which sought to turn them into "umpires of Indostan," their servants at Madras had been drawn into a perilous warfare, followed by a disastrous peace, with Haidar Ali, the ambitious ruler of Maisúr. Deserted presently in his need by his English allies, Haidar wreaked his vengeance in the war of 1780; the beginning of a long and deadly struggle, which ended only in the death of his terrible son Tippu, and the absorption of half his kingdom into the British pale.

Meanwhile in Bombay also the "rage for negotiations, treaties, and alliances," had borne fruit in a bewildering tangle of wars, treaties, intrigues, misunderstandings with this or that member of the Maratha League. By the treaty of Sálbai in 1782 Hastings broke up the union of the Maráthas with Maisúr, and put off for some years the inevitable fight for empire between the

countrymen of Sivaji and their English rivals. At the close of the eighteenth century no Native power except the Maráthas barred the way to English supremacy over the shattered empire of the Moghals.

During the vigorous rule of the Marquis Wellesley the great struggle began, famous for the victories won against formidable odds by the soldiers of Lake and Arthur Wellesley. Disheartened by a swift succession of defeats, the Marátha leaders, one after another, bowed to their fate, and fresh provinces were added to the rule of a Company which still resented the greatness thrust upon it against its will by the zeal of its own agents, or the force of circumstances outside their control. The "glorious little man"—as Metcalfe called him—who in seven years had placed all India within the Satlaj at his feet, was received at home with a vote of censure from the wise men of Leadenhall Street, whose injunctions to keep the peace and to forbear from meddling in the concerns of Native States he had been driven to disobey. His immediate successors did their best to contract the sphere of English influence, and to fix the bounds of English rule in India. But even Lord Minto had to stop by force the raids of Holkar's lieutenants against the Rajah of Berár; nor had Lord Moira been long in India, when Nipalese insults provoked a war which issued in the conquest of Kamáon, and the planting of an English resident at Káthmandú.

On the same ruler, thenceforth known as the Marquis of Hastings, devolved the yet larger task of hunting down the Pindári bands in Central India, and taking up the challenge once more hurled by the Maráthas at their former foes. In the course of one year his work was accomplished. Before the end of 1818 Báji Rao, the last of the Peshwas, had ceased to reign at Púna, the Rajah of Berár was a throneless wanderer, while Sindia and Holkar, shorn of much territory, figured only as vassal princes of an empire whose centre was neither Delhi nor Púna, but Calcutta.

The Nizam of the Dakhan and the King of Oudh alike ruled by sufferance of a power whose will had become law in every Native Court. The last traces of Moghal rule lingered only at Delhi, in the palace of its pensioned Emperor. The long-descended princes of Rájputána gave their allegiance more or less cheerfully to masters as merciful as Akbar and mightier than Aurangzib. Even Ranjit Singh, the founder of a great Sikh kingdom beyond the Satlaj, saw fit to curb his ambition within the bounds prescribed by those masterful neighbours who had stepped between

him and his intended victims, the Sikh Chiefs of Sirhind. From Cape Comorin to the Satlaj, from Gujarát to the borders of Assam, all India rested in peace and seeming contentment, under the sway or the supervision of an English viceroy appointed by the Crown to govern in the name of the East India Company. With the final overthrow of the Marátha power which had done so much to break up the Moghal Empire, and had since fought so vainly to stem the tide of British conquest, a new reign of peace, order, and general progress may be said to have begun for some hundred and fifty millions of people of diverse tongues, creeds, and characters, in a country which for more than a hundred years had been labouring through an endless whirl of anarchy and armed strife.

There was little rest, however, for their English masters even now. A few years later, in 1824, Lord Amherst went unwillingly to war with the King of Burma, whose troops were already marching on Bengal. In spite of many difficulties and some mismanagement, fortune once more smiled on our arms, and Assam, Arakan, and Tenasserim were added to the Company's Indian possessions. Under the beneficent rule of Lord William Bentinck, India enjoyed seven or eight years of almost unbroken peace, of slow but steady progress in civilized well-being. In his efforts to carry out the policy enjoined on him by the Court of Directors, he was aided as much, perhaps, by the strength of his own convictions and the bent of his own nature, as by the drift of circumstances working on his side. Yet even Lord William Bentinck had to put forth a hand of power against savage tyrants like the Rajah of Kúrg, and unjust or incompetent rulers like the Rajahs of Jodhpúr and Maisúr, and the King of Oudh. Both Kúrg and Maisúr were forfeited to the Company, and the little State of Kachar on the North-Eastern Frontier lapsed peacefully to the same masters on the death of its childless Rajah in 1832. A stern warning from the Governor-General put off for some time longer the doom that hung over the misgoverned kingdom of Oudh.

When Lord W. Bentinck left India in the spring of 1835, the task of governing that great and populous country in accordance with English notions of what was best for a mass of dark-skinned peoples, ruled by a few thousand white-faced foreigners from a far-off land, had been carried forward through all hindrances and wrong turnings with a fair measure of practical success. Each viceroy in his turn had added something to the foundations laid by Warren Hastings and his friend Impey. These two, the first Governor-General and the first Chief Justice of Bengal, laboured

zealously, and not in vain, to evolve order out of the existing chaos, and to promote by all just and lawful means the welfare of the millions for whom they legislated. Lord North's Regulating Act of 1773 had marked the intrusion of a new English influence into the Company's affairs; an influence which, for good or evil, was to leaven the whole process of Indian government. By this measure Parliament declared the actual supremacy of the Crown over the dominions ruled by the Company. The Governor-General, the members of his Council, the Judges of the Supreme Court, were all appointed directly or in effect by the Ministers of the Crown, without much regard for the wishes of the Company by whom their salaries were to be paid.* Pitt's India Bill of 1784 carried yet further the principle applied by Lord North. It reduced the Court of Directors to little more than a machine for registering the decrees of a Ministerial Board of Control. The former, indeed, were still left free to wield within certain limits their old powers and patronage in purely Indian affairs; but on all matters of high policy, the orders of the Secret Committee at the India House were inspired, dictated, revised, or sanctioned by the Minister who sat in Cannon Row.

In spite of this arrangement, which tended to mix up the shadow with the substance of sovereign power, and to place India's future in the hands of a Minister who might or might not care to exert his full authority, the work of government in India went forward smoothly enough under Lord Cornwallis and his successors. India was still a long way from England, and a Governor-General who could override the votes of his Council might still pursue at his leisure the policy which circumstances seemed to enjoin. To Lord Cornwallis belongs the chief credit for those reforms which defined the duties of collectors and judges, planted law-courts in every district, and raised the character with the pay of the Company's civil servants in Bengal. It is to be regretted that some of his reforms were effected at the cost of his native subjects, who found themselves excluded at one stroke from all but the lowest ranks in the public service of their own country. A certain increase of administrative efficiency, and a steady improvement in the moral tone of the Company's English servants, were attended by the growth of jobbery and extortion among the ill-paid native underlings, who abused to their own advantage the power they still wielded in a country governed by a few score

* Hastings himself was appointed by the Crown: his successors were to be nominated by the Company, subject always to the Crown's approval.

foreigners. Nor could any plea of State necessity justify the exclusion of competent natives from all those roads to preferment which had remained open, alike to Hindu and Mohammadan, even in the worst days of Moghal rule.

On the reforms effected by Lord Cornwallis in the land-revenue systems of Bengal, time and experience have passed a more favourable verdict. Immemorial custom had always assigned to successive rulers of India a large, if fluctuating, share in the revenues derived from the land. In Bengal the State's share had come to be levied on the Zamindárs, or revenue-farmers, whom Hastings everywhere found claiming ownership of the lands which had once belonged to the old village communities. Under his rule the assessments for land-revenue were revised at the end of every five years. In 1789 Lord Cornwallis decreed a new assessment for ten years. In 1793 the new settlement was made perpetual. From that time forth the Zamindárs of Bengal were to hold their lands for ever, on certain conditions, at the rent-rates fixed in 1789. Against the leading principle of this great measure, security of tenure at a rate fixed once for all, it has since been often objected that the Government thereby surrendered its right to readjust the land-tax—its main source of revenue—to any subsequent rise in the money value of the land. But this objection has already found a practical answer in the steadily-growing revenues, that mark the industrial and commercial progress of Bengal.

It were vain, however, to deny that the good effects of the Perpetual Settlement were marred for a time, and hindered by grave faults of detail. So high was the rate of assessment, so summary the process of collection, that a great many Zamindárs were sold out of the estates, their title to which had just been formally declared. Of the old peasantry, whose right to their ancestral holdings the new law asserted, while it failed sufficiently to guard, large numbers were speedily reduced to the condition of rack-rented tenants-at-will, or were fain to cultivate as mere serfs the fields which had once been theirs by right of inheritance or long prescription. If the new law bore in some things too hard upon the Zamindárs, the latter took their revenge with interest upon the Ráyats, or husbandmen, who saw their leases withheld, their rents raised under any pretext, their goods distrained without due notice, and themselves ground down by ever new and illegal demands. "Not a child can be born," wrote the Joint Magistrate of Rangpúr in 1815, "not a head religiously shaved,

not a son married, not a daughter given in marriage, not even one of the tyrannical fraternity dies, without an immediate visitation of calamity upon the Ráyat," in the shape of a new cess levied by the landlord's agent on his worldly goods. Lord Hastings himself, a few years later, declared that on all the larger estates the class of village proprietors "appeared to be in a train of annihilation," and would soon be extinct in default of a remedy which, after "the license of twenty years," it might perhaps be too late to apply.

Too late, indeed, it was to undo the mischief wrought by official blundering. But, in spite of all such drawbacks to the success of an experiment made perhaps too hastily, under conditions more or less harmful to the general weal, the new Settlement cannot be said to have ultimately missed its mark. After many years of dire confusion and distress a new class of landed gentry, enriched by trade and money-lending, rose upon the wrecks of other men's fortunes into a position of assured importance, if not of much political power. As an Indian district after a year of famine yields larger crops than it had ever done before, so did Bengal in due time begin to enter upon a career of unwonted prosperity. Waste lands were gradually brought under the plough; vast tracts of jungle gave place to fruitful fields; and the growing wealth of the province opened out new channels of trade and industry to its growing population, as well as new sources of income to the State. As the pressure of the land-tax grew yearly lighter its collection became easier, cheaper, and less uncertain. What of hardship and injustice the Ráyats might still incur at the hands of grasping Zamindárs and hungry middlemen, later legislation has done something noteworthy to redress. And to the silent working of the Perpetual Settlement may chiefly be ascribed the exemption which Bengal has on the whole enjoyed from the famines that afflicted her in bygone days.

In other parts of British India the land-revenue was gradually settled on very different bases from those adopted for Bengal. In Madras a series of experiments, carried on for a quarter of a century, issued in 1820 in the adoption of the Rayatwár Settlement—a scheme inseparably linked with the name of Sir Thomas Munro, the new Governor of Madras, one of the ablest of those soldier-statesmen whose deeds grace some of the fairest pages in our Indian history. Thenceforth the bulk of the land-revenue in his province was assessed, year by year and field by field, on each individual ráyat, or husbandman, at rates which varied with the

character of the land and the value of the crops raised. If the tree is to be judged by its fruits, it must be allowed that this settlement, "however plausible and even beneficent in theory, has practically failed to promote either the welfare of the Ráyat or the prosperity of the State."* The cultivated area of Madras has increased but slowly, while, owing to large but necessary reductions in the State demand, the land-revenue yields much less than it once did in proportion to the number of fields assessed.†

A modified form of the Ráyatwár settlement was introduced into the provinces ruled from Bombay. Here, however, the principle of yearly assessments gave place to settlements for fixed terms of ten, twenty, and finally of thirty years. In the North-West Provinces, on the other hand, the initial labours of Holt Mackenzie bore fruit some years later in the settlement undertaken by Robert Bird. To no abler hands could Lord W. Bentinck have entrusted the task of rectifying and completing the process first outlined by Lord Hastings, a ruler as successful in peace as in war. Under Bird's auspices ‡ the land-revenue was settled on the Village System for a term of thirty years. In other words, the *patél* or head man of each village community had to collect and pay over to Government the *jama*, or lump sum, charged on all the crop-bearing lands in his village; the several shares being settled among the landholders themselves by the Panchávat or village council. Under this settlement, carried out with infinite care and studied moderation, the fertile provinces watered by the Jamna and the Ganges, emerged from a state of chronic disorder into one of general, if not always unchecked prosperity.

During the ten years of his Indian rule, Lord Hastings had proved himself not only a successful soldier, but a statesman second perhaps to none of his class. The same ruler who planned and personally conducted the great campaigns against the Maráthas and Pindáris, threw himself with equal energy and clearness of aim into the work of administrative reform. In the trying climate of Calcutta he spared neither time nor pains in mastering the details of his business, in taking counsel with the ablest and wisest of his subordinates, and in seeing his own orders properly carried out. He had the courage, at that time great, to take a leading part in

* Marshman's "History of India," vol. ii. p. 360.

† According to Dr. W. Hunter, in the twenty-five years before 1879 the average rates per acre were reduced by over 23 per cent.

‡ He was President of the Revenue Board for the North-West Provinces during Lord W. Bentinck's rule.

the founding of schools and colleges for native pupils, and to forward the sale of the first native newspaper ever printed in Bengal.* From the English press in India he removed the censorship imposed by Lord Wellesley. The canal which had once fed Delhi with sweet water from the Jamna was thoroughly restored. But perhaps his greatest achievement lay in the region of finance. In spite of costly wars and other drains upon his treasury, Lord Hastings, without recourse to new taxation, added about six millions a year to the Company's revenue, which thus yielded a rich surplus rising over three millions in the last year of his rule. Within ten years the foreign trade of India had grown from fourteen to more than nineteen millions sterling, while the Company's credit in 1823 stood at a premium of 14 per cent. on a public debt which, thanks to his careful management, had been increased by only two millions and a third.†

Under his successor, Lord Amherst, these fair prospects were speedily overclouded. In the course of five years, memorable chiefly for the Burmese War and the fall of Bhartpur, the Company's debt was increased by ten millions, while the yearly surpluses were replaced by deficits of a million and more. Happier in his opportunities, Lord William Bentinck set himself to improve the Company's finances with such success that in 1835 he left behind him a surplus of a million and a half. But he left other legacies of yet more solid and lasting value. Before the end of 1829 he had issued the decree which made *Satti* or the burning of Hindu widows punishable as murder throughout British India. Next year he proclaimed a war of extirpation against the Thags, a brotherhood of secret murderers who, in the name of their goddess Káli, were wont to attack and strangle in lonely places the unwary travellers they had marked out for plunder. The task of hunting down these ruffians, who plied their fearful trade in Central and Southern India, devolved mainly on Major William Sleeman, who, aided by a staff of picked subordinates, tracked them into their secret lairs, caught two thousand of them in six years, and fairly broke the neck of a monstrous organism which had flourished even through many years of British rule.

Nor did Lord W. Bentinck's reforming efforts stop here. No statesman of his day seems to have been more alive to the

* *The Samáchar Darpan*, or *Mirror of News*, started by the Serampúr Mission.

† In 1822-3 it amounted to £29,382,000, the interest on which stood at £1,762,000 (Wilson's "British India," vol. ii. p. 399). The total revenue exceeded £23,000,000.

mischievous injustice of excluding the natives of India from all but the lowest offices in the public service of their own land. This was the cardinal error of Lord Cornwallis's policy; an error due less in fact to the prevalence of native corruption or to any other flaws in the native character than to the patronage which an English Company would naturally wield in behalf of its own friends and followers. To retrieve the error, to repair the injustice so far as he could, was an object on which Lord W. Bentinck had set his heart. It was accomplished in 1831, when a new class of native judges, drawing from £500 to £750 a year, was empowered to decide all civil suits up to the value of Rs. 5,000.* It was also declared that no native should thenceforth be debarred from office on account of caste, creed, or race. Besides opening the doors of office to native Christians, he took care that the old native laws of inheritance should be docked of those provisions which forbade the descent of property to heirs of another creed than that of their forefathers. Among other measures ordained or sanctioned by the same wise ruler, was the supplanting of Persian by some native language in the law-courts of the different provinces, the foundation of a medical college for Natives in Calcutta, and the introduction of English teaching into the State-aided schools of Bengal.

This attempt to encourage the study of Western lore and science by means of a language unknown to the mass of native scholars marks a new turning-point in our Indian policy. Former rulers of India, from Hastings onwards, had aimed at stimulating native culture by the methods dear not only to Indian Pandits but to Englishmen learned in the classic or the spoken languages of the East. They held with scholars like Sir William Jones, Edward Colebrooke, and Horace Wilson, that the study of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian offered the best channels for the diffusion of general knowledge and the surest means of improving the vernaculars themselves for all literary and educative purposes. On the other hand, a new school of statesmen and thinkers, imbued with the spirit of an age of political reform and intellectual enterprise, and filled whether with pity for Indian superstitions or with a fine insular scorn for all foreign prejudices, declared in effect that the time had come for essaying the moral conquest of the people whom our arms had already subdued. India was to

* In Madras the limit of value was placed at 10,000rs., and in Bombay no limit at all was required.

sit thenceforth at the feet of her new Gamaliel, who could guide her out of her olden darkness into all the knowledge, secular and spiritual, of modern Europe.

Foremost among the champions of the new Anglicism, itself born of that sense of mastery which success in great enterprises always confirms, were Charles Trevelyan of the Bengal Civil Service and Thomas Babington Macaulay, the fourth or law-member of the Governor-General's Council, as remodelled in 1833. As head of the Indian Board of Education, the brilliant essayist of a later day, scoffed in his own peremptory fashion at the artificial encouragement which his Board had hitherto given to the study of "absurd history, absurd metaphysics, absurd physics, and absurd theology." His friend and relative, the future Sir Charles Trevelyan, pleaded earnestly on the same side, while the pious and learned Dr. Duff, as head of the Scotch Kirk Mission in Calcutta, had already founded a school in which all things needful were taught by means of English alone.

To the movement thus conducted in India a marked impulse had meanwhile been given by the course of legislation at home. When the Company's charter was renewed by Parliament in 1813 for twenty years more, their old right of exclusive trade with India was utterly swept away by the same Act which still secured them in full possession of the China trade. Under the Charter Act of 1833 this shred of monopoly finally disappeared. That "two-headed monster," a Company which traded as well as fought and ruled,* was thus at length transformed into a purely political body, ruling India by sufferance of an English Parliament for a fixed term of years, under conditions which carried still further the dissolving process of 1784. Thenceforth the full right of any European not only to settle but to buy or rent land in any part of India was specially secured, to the disgust of the Court of Directors and the full contentment of Lord William Bentinck. In spite of the traditional jealousy of interlopers, India thus became an open field for that English enterprise which had already gained a footing in the indigo-plantations of Bengal.

Under the same Act the Governor-General of Bengal was transformed into Governor-General of India, a change which carried with it full powers of control over the Governments of Madras and Bombay. To the three members of his Supreme Council was

* As far back as 1765 Holwell, of Black Hole renown, had written that "a trading and a fighting company is a two-headed monster in nature that cannot exist long" (Kaye's "Administration of the East India Company").

added a fourth, whose special duty was to aid the Council in making laws and regulations for the whole Indian empire. The legislative powers thus taken from the minor Governments and centred in "the Governor-General in Council," were limited only by the veto of the India House Board. The North-West Provinces were to have a Government of their own; the Governor-General retaining for himself the direct government of Bengal. The new seat in the Supreme Council fell to Macaulay, who with the training of a lawyer combined scholarship worthy of Dr. Johnson, literary talents of the first order, and the reputation of a rising statesman in the ranks of the dominant Whig party. What India gained by his labours in one direction we have already seen. How much he did to improve and simplify the old methods of dealing with crime, was hardly known till many years later, when the Indian Penal Code which Macaulay himself had drafted became law.

One of the first fruits of the new powers entrusted to the Supreme Council was the Act which declared the Press throughout India free. Practical freedom the Press had on the whole enjoyed for some years past, but the harsh laws under which Mr. Silk Buckingham had been deported in 1823 were still unrepealed when Lord W. Bentinck returned home in 1835. Happily his successor for the time being was Sir Charles Metcalfe, a civil servant of the Company who had made his mark as a diplomatist under Lord Wellesley, had since helped to mould the policy of one Native Court after another, and had finally borne a leading part in all the State business done by the Governor-General's Council. His ripe experience was enhanced by a rare freedom from class prejudice, while the strength of his convictions displayed itself as readily in action as in speech. The reform which his predecessor had declared inevitable, Metcalfe in one moment brought to pass. Aided and encouraged by Macaulay's eloquent pen, he carried out his purpose in the Act of September, 1835, which left the Press unshackled by any form of State control, and free to speak its mind out before the world within the limits prescribed by the law of England.

This great measure, as wise in principle as it was boldly carried through, brought Metcalfe's Indian career to a sudden close. Official persons and classes have a natural if rather foolish dislike to public criticism; and a great many people connected with India looked upon a free Press as the worst of all dangers to the British rule. It has proved in fact among the best of

safeguards, if its uses be but rightly understood. The Court of Directors, however, could not forgive the ablest of their servants, the most popular statesman of his day in India, for daring to prove the honesty and courage of his own convictions at their expense. A few months ago they had pleaded hard for the right to appoint him Governor-General in Lord W. Bentinck's room. Now they refused to name him even for the Government of Madras. In the following March Lord Auckland, the new Governor-General, landed at Calcutta, and shortly afterwards Sir Charles Metcalfe exchanged the service of the Company for a career of fresh distinction under the Crown.

NOTE TO CHAPTER I.

At this time our Indian Empire, including of course the Native States, embraced all India within the Satlaj and the eastern borders of Sind. Its northern boundary was the Himalayas about Simla and Almora. On the east it marched with the Burman frontier along Assam, Arakan, and Tenasserim. Its whole area exceeded 1,300,000 square miles, of which about 700,000 were ruled directly by the Company's officers. The population of British India at this period must have numbered about 140 millions, of which at least 50 millions may be assigned to Bengal and Assam, and 25 millions to the North-Western Provinces, which had just been placed under a Lieutenant-Governor. The Aryan Hindus formed the great bulk of the population in most parts of the country, even in Bengal, where many millions of the people are Mohammadans by creed but Hindus by descent. In Madras, on the other hand, where the people are nearly all Hindu by creed, the bulk are probably of Dravidian, that is, of non-Aryan descent. In Bombay, which consisted chiefly of provinces wrested from the Maráthas in 1818, the Marátha or Hindu element largely prevailed. Of the native territories within the British pale, Rájputána, a cluster of States of different sizes, was peopled mainly by Hindus; Haidrabád by Mussulmans of Afghan or Moghal descent. In Oudh, Maisúr, Travankor, in the Marátha States of Central and Western India, the population was mostly Hindu. The same may be said of what are now the Central Provinces. Among the hills and jungles throughout the country were scattered some ten millions of Bhils, Kháṇds, Kols, Sántáls, and other wild races of an Australasian or Mongolian type.

CHAPTER II.

THE EVE OF WAR.

Lord Auckland's rule began as peacefully as Lord W. Bentinck's. His first lessons in administration had been learned at the English Admiralty. He had all the industry and the active habits needed for his new office, combined with an easy temper and a large share of common sense. He had gone out to India pledged to lose no occasion of "doing good to his fellow-creatures, of promoting education and knowledge, and of extending the blessings of good government and happiness to millions in India." Such were the words in which he addressed his hearers at a farewell dinner given by the Court of Directors to their new lord-deputy.

One of the first questions which called for his decision concerned the policy of exempting Europeans from the civil jurisdiction of native judges in the *Mofasal* or up-country courts. Our countrymen in India have always been impatient of any scheme for reducing them to a level with their dark-skinned neighbours before the law. To be tried even by an English judge in any court save the Supreme Court of their own Presidency, was in their eyes a downright insult to the British name. It was a question which certainly had two sides, and Lord Auckland's Council took the side of even-handed justice to all classes alike. In May, 1836, they passed an Act which brought Europeans under the jurisdiction they had so much dreaded. Loud-toned appeals against this "Black Act" beset the India House and evoked a lively debate in the House of Commons. But the Melbourne Ministry were in power, and the Directors could not, even if they would, annul an edict confirmed by Downing Street and Cannon Row.

With the exception of a slight outbreak in the jungles of Gúmsar, a hill-country adjoining the Northern Sarkárs, peopled by wild aboriginal Khánds who offered human sacrifices to their Earth Goddess, nothing ruffled the peace of India during the

first year of Lord Auckland's rule. Owing to the Gúmsar Rajah's revolt in 1835, his country had been placed in the charge of British officers, one of whom, Major Macpherson, was labouring zealously to wean his people from their barbarous practices, when some of their chiefs rose in arms against their new masters and the rebellion had to be put down by force. In the middle of the following year a new source of disquietude arose for a moment in Oudh. The process of transforming the Nawáb-Vazir of Hastings' time into a sovereign ally of the British power had been consummated by Lord Hastings in 1819, when the son of Sádat Ali was allowed to call himself King of Oudh. He reigned by sufferance only of his English friends, to whom Sádat Ali had made over some of his fairest provinces in 1801, and whose paramount lordship over the remainder was enforced by the presence of a British Resident at Lucknow and of British officers commanding his best troops. On the death of Sádat Ali's grandson, Násir-ud-din, in July 1837, the vacant throne was disputed by two claimants, one of whom enjoyed the support of the late king's chief widow. Her retainers filled the palace and installed her favourite, a mere pretender, as king. The rightful heir, an uncle of the late king, remained for the moment a prisoner in their hands. But the cool courage of the Resident, Colonel John Low, a plain old soldier who had fought at Mahidpur and graduated as a political in several Native Courts, saved Lucknow from civil war, and overrode the danger which threatened his own life and that of his brave subalterns, Patton and Shakespeare. In a very few hours a Sepoy Regiment, the famous 35th, was at his side; after a fruitless parley the palace gate was blown in by a gun, the Bégam and her nominee were taken prisoners; and Mohammad Ali was crowned king by the Resident's own hands.*

During the five years of his reign the new king showed his gratitude by loyally doing his best to govern Oudh in some accordance with English ideas. The ministers whom his nephew had discarded he at once recalled to power, and when they died their places were filled by competent successors. The royal palace ceased to be a paradise for fiddlers, dancing-girls, and buffoons. Something was done to check the prevailing disorders, to reform the revenue system, and to refill by careful management

* A new treaty, signed by Mohammad Ali, was disallowed by the Court of Directors, and the treaty of 1801 remained in force.

an exhausted treasury,* But the king was already old and a cripple, and his death in 1842 opened the way for a successor who displayed none of his father's virtues, and made over the business of government to favourites as worthless as himself.

In the year of Mohammad Ali's accession to the throne of Oudh a terrible famine was raging over the North-Western Provinces from Delhi to Allahabad. It was not the first by many of those drought-born calamities which the historian of British India has to record. The great famine of 1770 is reckoned to have slain through hunger or disease ten million people in Bengal, while for some years afterwards large tracts of tilth-land lay waste, or covered with rank jungle, for want of men to cultivate them. Other famines of varying extent and intensity did their cruel work from time to time in different parts of India; too often completing the havoc wrought by a Marátha or Pindári raid, or a war on our part with some Native Power. Twice in the first quarter of the nineteenth century had the North-Western Provinces been scourged by famine; but that which now afflicted them was the worst they had known since 1784, when wheat sold for seven or eight times its normal price. The scanty rainfall of 1836 had turned the fruitful Doáb between the Jamna and the Ganges† into a bare, brown, sandy plain, yielding no food to speak of for men or cattle. Multitudes of starving wretches thronged the roads between Cawnpore and Agra, dying in thousands by the wayside, or keeping themselves alive on roots and berries, on refuse straw, even on the grain which had passed out of the bodies of troop-horses on the line of march. The more desperate among them robbed the grain-carts, and broke into the stores of the grain-dealers whenever they had a chance. Happy were they who found help from private charity, or had strength left to earn a daily pittance on the relief-works opened by the Government throughout the suffering districts. Although our countrymen on the spot laboured zealously according to their means and knowledge to save human lives, some eight hundred thousand appear to have died of hunger and its attendant diseases, while the loss to Government from remissions of land-revenue alone came up to nearly a million sterling.‡

Meanwhile other cares were already absorbing the mind of the

* Irwin's "Garden of India;" Sir H. Lawrence's "Essays Military and Political."

† Doáb, or land between two rivers.

‡ Kaye's "Administration of the East India Company"—"Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1880."

Governor-General and his colleagues. The peace, which had remained well-nigh unbroken for twelve years, was at length to issue in a foolish, unjust, disastrous war, which involved India in a heavy debt, and left on our fair fame a slur such as even its crowning triumphs could not efface. In order to tell aright the story of the first Afghan War we must go back to the time when Ahmad Shah, the Duráni ruler of Kábul, fought and won the great battle of Pánipat on the plains of Sirhind to the north of Delhi. Thenceforth the dread of an invasion from the North-West coloured the policy of Anglo-Indian statesmen from Warren Hastings down to Lord Minto. In 1799 the great Afghan's grandson, Zamán Shah, was on the point of invading India from Lahór when domestic troubles, which Lord Wellesley aided in fomenting, drove him back into his Afghan hills. In the following year Captain John Malcolm, the young Sepoy officer who had disarmed the French contingent at Haidrabád, and marched with Colonel Wellesley on Seringapatam, was sent to Teheran for the purpose of thwarting French intrigues, and raising up strong barriers against Afghan ambition. In due time the successful envoy brought back a treaty which bound the Shah of Persia to expel every Frenchman from his dominions, and to aid his new friends in keeping all invaders from the north-west out of Hindustani.

The dread of invasion, thus allayed for the present, broke out again after the Peace of Tilsit, as concluded in 1807 between Buonaparte and the Russian Tzar. Those erewhile foes had come to an understanding, which seemed to bode mischief to our Indian Empire. Disappointed of help from India against the Russians, whom he had rashly provoked to war, the Shah of Persia had flung himself into an alliance with England's fiercest foe, the French Emperor. In order to meet this new turn of affairs Colonel Malcolm was despatched in 1808 by Lord Minto to Teherán. His mission proved a failure at the outset, for he never got beyond Shiráz; but next year a better fortune greeted Sir Harford Jones, who had been sent out from England on the very mission which Lord Minto had consigned to another. The Shah agreed to dismiss the French embassy, to recall his own envoy from Paris, and to send an embassy to London. In the treaty afterwards concluded with Sir Harford's successor the Shah pledged himself to arrest by force or otherwise the march of any European troops towards India, and to retain in his service no officers of any European nation hostile to Great Britain. The

English in their turn agreed to help him with arms or money against all wanton aggressors from the West, and to defray the cost of any army which Persia at our request might send into Afghánistán.* This treaty, in an amended shape, was finally ratified in 1814.

About the same time a splendid embassy had been led to the Court of Shah Shujá, Zamán Shah's brother and successor, at Pesháwar by Mountstuart Elphinstone, one of the ablest and most scholarly statesmen whom the Company's service has ever brought to light. In return for a proffered alliance with the Indian Government the Afghan ruler asked for a subsidy which would enable him to put down the revolt already begun by his brother Mahmud, and to keep the "gate of India," namely, Kábul, closed against all invaders. To this request, which Elphinstone himself supported, Lord Minto's Council turned a deaf ear. Shah Shujá, however, accepted a treaty which bound him to oppose, at the Company's cost, every attempt of the French or any other Power to invade India by way of Afghanistan. But before the ratified treaty had left Lord Minto's hands on its return journey in 1810, Shah Shujá was a king no longer, except in name, and Elphinstone had set his face towards Hindustan, carrying with him the materials for a volume, full even now of varied interest, on the people and the country which he had visited.

During the next eighteen years nothing happened in the countries beyond the Indus to disquiet the minds of English statesmen, whether in India or at home. All fear of a French invasion had died out even before Buonaparte's retreat from Moscow. The once great Afghan kingdom was well-nigh torn to pieces by internal quarrels and successful revolts. Ranjit Singh, the greatest of Sikh princes, had set up as independent ruler of the country he had held in the name of an Afghan master. The Tzar of Russia had so won upon our good-will by his resolute stand against the "Corsican Ogre," that the steady progress of Russian arms towards the Caspian and the Sea of Aral was regarded in England with a careless, even with an approving eye. Persia was losing province after province to her Northern assailant; but, in spite of existing treaties, neither the English nor the Indian Government could lift up a finger in her behalf. It was not till Prince Paskewich had crowned his late successes by preparations for a march upon Teheran, that Canning's Ministry made some

* Kaye's "Afghan War;" Rawlinson's "England and Russia in the East;" Marshman's "History of India," &c.

effort to stay further bloodshed. By the Treaty of Turkmanchai, as signed in 1828, the Shah agreed to forfeit another large slice of territory, to grant his Russian conqueror the sole right of keeping an armed fleet on the Caspian, and to pay a fine of something like four millions sterling for the costs of a war which his own people appear to have provoked.

Now it was that Persia's weakness became England's opportunity. Under the treaty of 1814, the Shah had claimed our help, and many Englishmen held that such claim might fairly have been allowed.* In order to put the question beyond all doubt for the future, the English Government proposed to buy themselves out of obligations awkward to discharge and unseemly to disavow. Groaning under the weight of his new liabilities, the Shah caught at any means of gaining partial relief. In return for the payment of two hundred thousand *tománs*—about £300,000—he agreed to expunge from the treaty aforesaid those articles which bound his English friends to aid him in any defensive war.

By this time another change was coming over the spirit of our political dreams. A government founded on conquest is not less liable to recurring panics than a country whose harvests depend on the yearly rainfall is liable to recurring droughts. With regard to India, the panic season was once more setting in even before Lord W. Bentinck's return home. People began to look with anxious eyes on the rapid growth of that Muscovite Power which had just dictated peace to Turkey from the ramparts of Adrianople, was fast obliterating the last traces of Polish freedom, and was carrying its arms or its influence eastward to the very borders of Afghánistán. Under that influence the brave Prince Abbas, son of the reigning Shah of Persia, had set forth in 1829, to reconquer Khorásán, in pursuance of a scheme which embraced new conquests in Turkistán, and the re-establishment of Persian rule in the Afghán provinces of Herát and Kandáhár. His death in 1833 arrested the march of his son, Prince Mohammad, on Herát. But the old Shah himself dying in 1834, Prince Mohammad, as his rightful heir and acknowledged successor, found himself free to renew the enterprise on which his father had set his heart.

It soon became clear that the new sovereign cared much less for his grandfather's English friends than for the powerful and pushing ally who might help him to repair his country's fortunes at the expense of an Afghan or an Uzbek foe. The "Key of India,"

* Among the chief supporters of this view were the Duke of Wellington and Sir John Malcolm.—Kaye's "Afghan War."

as Herát was already called by Russophobes and sciolists, had not yet passed out of the hands of its Saduzai masters into those of Dost Mohammad or any other chief of the dominant Barakzai clan. It was still possessed by Prince Kámrán, son of that Mahmúd Shah, who, after ousting his brother, Shah Shujá, from the throne of Kábul, had himself been driven from power by the brethren of his murdered Vazir, Fathi Khán.* On his father's death in 1829, Kámrán had succeeded him as ruler of Herát, acknowledging the Shah of Persia for his suzerain. His frequent raids into Persian ground gave the new Shah a sufficient handle for the chastisement of so troublesome a liege. This, indeed, was admitted by our own Minister at Teherán, Sir John McNeil. It was not, however, till the middle of 1837, that Mohammad Shah began his eventful march upon Kámrán's stronghold.

By that time the newborn jealousy of Russian intrigues in Central Asia, the renewed alarm for the safety of British India, the chatter of diplomatists, who saw everything through other people's eyes, the reports of officers who saw only what they wished to see, the distorted gossip of Indian and Afghan bazaars, reproduced in English newspapers and pamphlets, the demand of English trade for new markets—all conspired to impress a Government whose foreign policy was guided by Lord Palmerston, with the need of taking swift and sweeping precautions against an imaginary danger. Beneath all such incentives to a rash and meddling policy lurked the magic of an obsolete tradition, born of a time when successive invaders, Afghan, Turk, and Persian poured down from the trans-Indus ranges into the plains of Hindustan. Because certain things had happened to an India torn by internal quarrels, it was thought that they might be repeated at any moment under a Government strongly established, with its base resting on our natural stronghold, the sea, and with all the resources of the powerful British nation at its back. To let the Persians become masters of Herát was to throw open the gate of India to a Power which clearly made use of Persia as a cat's-paw in furtherance of a grand scheme of conquest ascribed to Tzar Peter the Great himself.†

One of Lord Palmerston's colleagues in the Ministry was Sir John Hobhouse, afterwards known as Lord Broughton, who then

* He had first been blinded, and afterwards cut to pieces by Mahmud's orders.

† An invasion of India formed part of the scheme accredited to Tzar Peter in a will which, even had it been genuine, dates from a time when no part of India had yet passed into our hands.

sat as President of the Board of Control. Under his orders, transmitted through the Secret Committee of the India House, Lord Auckland began to take measures for thwarting Russian intrigues in the countries neighbouring his Indian frontier. He himself had no wish to meddle more than could be helped in the politics of border nations. "My friend"—he had written to Dost Mohammad in 1836—"you are aware that it is not the practice of the British Government to interfere in the affairs of other independent States." This reference to the Afghan ruler's quarrel with Ranjit Singh, who had wrested from him the old Afghan province of Pesháwar, Lord Auckland had followed up by a hint of his intention to "depute some gentlemen" on a commercial errand to the Amir's Court. The leadership of a mission fraught with issues which no one at the time foresaw, was entrusted to a Captain in the Bombay Army, who had already earned some fame as an enterprising traveller and accomplished linguist. In 1830 Alexander Burnes had set out from Bombay, charged by its Governor, Sir John Malcolm, to conduct to Lahór, by way of the Indus, a batch of dray-horses which Lord Ellenborough had sent out from England as a present to Ranjit Singh. The jealous, sometimes the hostile attitude of the Sind Amirs, who regarded the presence of Englishmen on the Indus as a first step to the conquest of Sind, delayed the advance of Burnes and his companions for several months.* At length, all dangers surmounted, they reached Lahór, where the jovial old Lion of the Panjáb gave Burnes a hearty welcome and princely entertainment during his stay.

Arriving at Simla, which was fast becoming the usual summer retreat of jaded Governors-General, Burnes found in Lord William Bentinck an attentive listener to his tales of past adventure, and a ready supporter of his schemes for further exploration. With the Governor-General's sanction he undertook a long and hazardous journey by way of Kábul and Bokhára, back through Persia to Bombay. In 1833 he returned home from Calcutta to publish a lively book of travels, and to become for a time the "lion" of fashionable life. Returning to India in 1835, he was presently despatched on a mission to Haidrabád, the capital of Sind. He had just prevailed upon the reluctant Amirs to sanction a project for surveying the Indus, when Lord Auckland requested him to take charge of a commercial mission to the Court of Dost

* "Sind is now gone, since the English have seen the river which is the road to its conquest," exclaimed a Saiyid who saw Burnes's party on their way up.

Mohammad. In November, 1836, Burnes once more sailed from Bombay to "work out the policy of opening the River Indus to British commerce," and to keep his eyes open to all that was going forward in Afghánistán.

This scheme of a commercial agency, when mooted two years before by Burnes himself, had found small favour with older and far more experienced men. St. George Tucker, then chairman of the Court of Directors, denounced it as sure to "degenerate into a political agency," which must sooner or later involve us in "all the entanglements of Afghan politics." Sir Charles Metcalfe, who had steadily inveighed for years against all attempts, open or covert, at interfering with the countries beyond the Indus, once more recorded in a Council Minute his strong objections to the scheme propounded by Burnes.* But pressure from many quarters at length overbore all wiser counsels at Government House; and the instructions forwarded thence to Bombay left much to the discretion of an officer whose talents had never been tempered by a sound judgment, or much self-control.

Passing leisurely through Sind and the Panjáb, Lord Auckland's envoy made his way under Sikh protection through the Khaibar Pass, and in September, 1837, was welcomed into Kábul with all the pomp and splendour that Dost Mohammad could afford. That able and resolute prince, whose strong hand and cunning brain had kept him for eleven years on the throne of Kábul was smarting under the failure of all his efforts to regain possession of Pesháwar. To rescue the fairest province of the old Afghan kingdom from the hands of Sikh infidels had become the one purpose which lay next his heart, in pursuance of which he would have clinched an alliance even with the heretical Shah of Irán.† He had already been making overtures to Russia, but the arrival at Kábul of an English agent who had been his guest there five years before, encouraged him to renew his former efforts after a friendly arrangement with the masters of India and the good friends of Ranjit Singh. Burnes, for his part, lent himself to the Amir's plans with a readiness sharpened by his dread of Russian influence, and his zeal for advancing the interests of his own country in his own way. He had come, as he himself wrote to a private friend, not only to

* Kaye's "War in Afghanistan." Some years before, Metcalfe had condemned the scheme of surveying the Indus under cover of a mission to Lahór, as "a trick unworthy of our Government."

† The orthodox Súni Mussulmans of Afghánistán hated the Persian Shiahs as cordially as some English Churchmen hate Romanists and Protestant Dissenters.

"look after commerce," but to survey the land, to "see into affairs, and judge of what was to be done hereafter;" and the hereafter, to his thinking, had "already arrived."*

The commercial mission to a country which had no commerce worth mentioning was soon put out of sight. Talk about politics with the Amir and his counsellors filled its place. Dost Mohammad had taken the measure of his frank and lively guest, and agreed with cheerfulness to almost everything which Burnes recommended. He would do anything that the British Government desired, if the latter would but use its good offices with Ranjit Singh for the restoration of Peshâwar, of which the Sikhs had so basely robbed him during his struggles with Shah Shujâ. He would eschew all engagements and intrigues with other Powers, would command and even compel his brothers at Kandâhâr to give up all connection with Persia, would even, if need were, consent to hold Peshâwar as a tributary fief of Lahór. Burnes on the other hand, however pleased with the Amir's assurances and confident in his good faith, could make no promises in return; could only hold out a hope that Ranjit Singh, already alive to the costliness of his new conquest, might agree to place it under the charge of Dost Mohammad's brother, Sultán Mohammad Khán. To this arrangement the Amir at first demurred, as giving unfair advantage to a brother who had proved to him both a false friend and a bitter foe. But by the end of October he appears, from Burnes's account, to have resolved on swallowing that pill also, if his English friends were so minded.†

Unhappily both Amir and Envoy were reckoning without their hosts, the Governor-General and the Maharajah of Lahór. Whatever might have been Lord Auckland's intentions, both of them knew the commercial mission to be a mere mask for political intrigue; and Dost Mohammad argued fairly enough that a Power which sought his friendship would be ready to grant him something good in return. Burnes believed that his amended instructions had placed "a vast latitude" in his hands; he had received many proofs of the Amir's sincerity; and he looked with reason upon Dost Mohammad as the foremost man of his day in Afghánistán. Granted that a forward policy had become for us the one thing needful, then Burnes's efforts in that line ought to have been seconded by his employers, even when of his own

* Kaye's "War in Afghanistan." † Ibid.

authority he offered the Kandáhár Chiefs three lakhs of rupees (£30,000) if they would break off all connection with Persia, come what might. By enabling his envoy to strengthen the hands of Dost Mohammad and his brethren, and by putting the needful pressure on Ranjit Singh, Lord Auckland would have secured by peaceful means all those ends for which, a year later, he rushed into an unrighteous and costly war.

But the Governor-General had already learned to distrust the ruler in whom Burnes confided, and Ranjit Singh had no wish to yield Peshâwar on any conditions to the great Afghan rival whom he loved so little and had wronged so much. Having no fixed policy of his own, Lord Auckland lent an easy ear to the counsels of his chief secretary, William Macnaghten, and of his agent on the Satlaj frontier, Captain Claude Wade. The latter especially had always shown himself a strong partisan of Shah Shujá, who made use of his English asylum at Ludiána to concoct schemes for the recovery of his lost throne. Thanks to Wade's encouragement, to Lord W. Bentinck's ill-timed inertness,* and to the countenance secretly offered by Ranjit Singh, the Afghan exile had set out in 1833 on his second attempt to reconquer Afghánistán. His final defeat by Dost Mohammad at Kandáhár sent him back to his old asylum to brood over past failures, to plot fresh schemes, and to draw from the Indian Government the pension which its bounty would not yet withhold.

Disheartened but not quite cast down, Wade still laboured, if not for the restoration of Shah Shujá, at least for the discouragement of his thrice victorious foe. Smitten like Burnes with the prevalent dread of Russia, he refused to see in a strong united kingdom ruled by Dost Mohammad the best possible solution of the Central Asian problem. India's safety was rather to be found in the disunion of the Afghan chiefs and the aggrandizement of Ranjit Singh. His comments on Burnes's despatches, which passed regularly through his hands, inclined Lord Auckland more and more strongly against that officer's views and pleadings on behalf of the Amir.† Burnes was censured for going beyond his instructions, and bidden to withdraw in the best way he could his offer of subsidy to the Kandáhár chiefs. In a separat letter to Dost Mohammad Lord Auckland urged him to give all thoughts of recovering Peshâwar, to trust in the good

* Durand's "First Afghan War." † Ibid

of the Indian Government, and to make no treaties with other Powers without the sanction of the Governor-General, on pain of losing the favour of a Government which had stood between him and Ranjit Singh.

These letters were written in January, 1838.* By that time a strange apparition had begun to vex the Envoy's soul in the shape of a Russian emissary from Orenburg, who arrived at Kábul by way of Kandáhár. Captain Vitkavitch brought with him a letter, probably genuine, from the Tzar, thanking the Amir for his friendly overtures and promises to encourage trade between Russian subjects and the people of Kábul. It was a harmless letter enough, but its arrival threw Burnes, for a time, into a fever of wild speculation, which presently cooled down when he saw how lightly Dost Mohammad treated the whole affair. The Amir received Vitkavitch with the coldest courtesy, and for some weeks took little notice of him. "He still clung," says Kaye, "to the belief that the British Government would look favourably upon his case, and was willing to receive a little from England rather than much from any other State." Even after the receipt of discouraging news from India, he avowed his readiness to accept a compromise, which Wade himself proposed to urge upon Ranjit Singh—a compromise which would have consigned Pesháwar to the joint keeping of Sultán Mohammad and the Amir.

Down to the 21st February, the day when he received Lord Auckland's ungracious letter, Dost Mohammad still looked coldly upon the Russian agent, still pressed his own views upon the sympathizing but disheartened Burnes. Even then he would not wholly despair. Burnes, though now as hopeless as he had once been sanguine, remained some weeks longer at his post, listening sadly to the pleadings and remonstrances of the Amir's counsellors, and discussing politics on one occasion with the Amir himself. Even as late as March 21, Dost Mohammad wrote once more to the Governor-General, who had asked so much from him and granted nothing in return, imploring him to "remedy the grievances of the Afghans," and to give them "a little encouragement and power." But to this last despairing appeal for common justice no answer came, and before the end of April the Amir's patience had worn itself out. One of the Kandáhár chiefs [illegible] on a mission to his brother at Kábul; Vitkavitch rode in

* [illegible] were sent from the Governor-General's camp at Baréli, in Rohilkhand.

state through the streets of that city; and on the 26th of April, Burnes started on his way back to India.

It is hard to conceive anything more fatuous than the policy pursued at this time by English statesmen towards countries lying far beyond our Indian frontier. Well indeed might Dost Mohammad's ministers complain that the Afghans were asked to give up all intercourse with Persia, Russia and Turkistán, without receiving any pledge of British protection in return; for the idea of protection from Ranjit Singh was too absurd to be taken seriously. And good cause had they for laughter at the panic into which brave English gentlemen were thrown by the sound of a Persian march upon Herát, by the arrival of a Persian agent at Kandáhár or a Russian agent at Kábul; as if none but British troops had a right to march anywhere and fight anybody; as if friendly intercourse with other than a British Government were a crime, and none but English officers could presume to conduct a political intrigue under the disguise of a commercial mission. Persia also had reason to complain of our interference in her quarrel with Herát. The distant phantom of Russian aggression had turned our statesmen and diplomatists into monomaniacs, deaf to all pleadings of morality and common prudence, and was now driving a peace-loving Governor-General into a course of folly and wrongdoing which has hardly a parallel in English history.

In spite of past rebuffs, Burnes once more tried to soften Lord Auckland's heart towards the Amir. Early in June, on his way down to Lahór, he wrote to Macnaghten a long letter, expounding his own views of the policy which ought to be adopted if Dost Mohammad was really to be thrown over. "But it remains," he went on, "to be reconsidered why we cannot act with Dost Mohammad. He is a man of undoubted ability, and has at heart a high opinion of the British nation; and if half you must do for others were done for him . . . . he would abandon Russia and Persia to-morrow." And he held it to be "the best of all poli[cies] to make Kábul in itself as strong as we can make it, and [not] weaken it by divided forces." But the last word had alr[eady] been spoken in the Simla Council. The Amir's doom was [sealed] in Lord Auckland's minute of the 12th of May. Of three [courses] open to him, as therein stated, the Governor-General c[hose] the worst. He would neither abandon the Afghans to thei[r fate], grant any succour to the Amir of Kábul and his [brother] Kandáhár; but he would sanction and encourage an

which our Sikh ally might make upon Kábul in concert with any force which Shah Shujá, aided by British officers, might succeed in bringing into the field.

By the end of May, Macnaghten was at Lahór, ready to discuss with the wily old Sikh ruler, who was even then sinking to his grave, the terms of a treaty embodying Lord Auckland's latest plans for the ruin of Dost Mohammad. Before the end of June the two plotters—for such they were—had completed a Tripartite Treaty, modelled on the compact which Ranjit Singh had made with Shah Shujá in 1833, when the pensioned exile of Ludiána was about to assay one more bootless effort for the recovery of his long-lost throne. By this unholy alliance against a ruler who had done us no conceivable wrong, whose proffered friendship we had deliberately spurned, whose right to govern had been acknowledged by the mass of his Afghan subjects, and confirmed by every incident of his wise and vigorous rule, the contracting parties bound themselves to act together in fulfilment of a purpose which, however plausible on the side of Shah Shujá and pardonable on that of Ranjit Singh, meant for Englishmen a course of pure robbery, pursued under pretexts transparently false. As if to crown the insensate wickedness of a policy inspired by a foolish dread of Russia, and the fear of offending our Sikh ally, the true character of the whole proceeding was erelong veiled from English eyes by the Afghan Blue-book of 1839, which made the worse appear the better cause by a process of skilful garbling, first exposed some years later by the well-known historian of the Afghan War. Out of Burnes's own letters the compilers of that Blue-book contrived to show that the Amir of Kábul and his kinsmen of Kandáhár had from first to last behaved as steady and eager foes of the British power. Every word in Burnes's despatches which hinted at the least desire of Dost Mohammad to compromise his quarrel with Ranjit Singh, or to give up the friendship of Persia for that of England; every reason that [illegible]rnes himself put forward for believing in his royal friend, and [illegible] counteracting Persia by strengthening the Amir; was carefully [illegible]ed out of the published papers. Here a few words, there a [illegible]ce or a whole paragraph, was left out, and of the gaps thus [illegible]not a trace remained. The twenty-four paragraphs of the [illegible] rebuking Burnes for his unauthorized dealings with the [illegible] brothers were melted down into three. Even of the [illegible] Burnes wrote in June from Hasan Abdál not a word [illegible]print to show how strenuously he still pleaded in

behalf of one whose doom was already sealed. His own character in short was quietly slandered away by the same process which transformed a friendly neighbour into a determined foe.*

In the new treaty nothing was said about any project for helping Shah Shujá with troops furnished by the Indian Government. But one article of the treaty imposed on the Sind Amirs the payment of a heavy sum to the Shah and his Sikh ally in quittance of all claims which the former might have urged against the erewhile vassals of an Afghán king. But seeing that Sind had long since cast off the yoke of Kábul, and that all such claims had once been disavowed on the Korán by Shah Shujá himself,† it was natural that the Amirs should resent this sudden revival of an old demand as a piece of shameless extortion on the part of all concerned. But they had yet to learn the full measure of English wrong-doing towards a weak neighbour.

From Lahór Macnaghten hurried back to Ludiána, where Shah Shujá received him with a cordiality heightened by expectations of what was coming. After two conferences the Shah's signature to the treaty, which promised to replace him on the throne of his blind old brother and fellow-exile, Zamán Shah, was duly obtained, and on the 17th of July the English envoy set out again for Simla, to discuss with Lord Auckland and his advisers the next step to be taken in that wild enterprise to which the Indian Government now stood committed. He found the Governor-General already prepared to go far beyond the part assigned to him by the Tripartite Treaty. Two of Lord Auckland's secretaries, John Colvin and Henry Torrens, were quietly pushing him along the slope which led down to a black abyss of crime, disaster, and disgrace.

* A revised edition of the Blue-book was published in 1861.

† He had given the Amirs two formal releases written in Koráns, signed and sealed by himself—(Kaye's "Afghan War").

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST AFGHÁN WAR.

EARLY in August, while the Persians were yet encamped before Herát, India was alive with preparations for the assemblage of a powerful army, by whose aid Shah Shujá was to be borne in triumph to Kandáhár and Kábul. Such was the plan which Lord Auckland had now accepted against his own better judgement, without the concurrence of his own Council, against the wishes of the Court of Directors, against the judgement of great military and political sages, of such men for instance as the Duke of Wellington, Lord Wellesley, Sir Charles Metcalfe, Mountstuart Elphinstone, and St. George Tucker. The Great Duke declared that any movement across the Indus to settle the government of Afghánistán would result in a "perennial march into that country." Lord Wellesley inveighed against the folly of occupying a land of "rocks, sands, deserts, ice, and snow." Metcalfe held that "the surest way to bring Russia down upon ourselves is for us to cross the Indus and meddle with the countries beyond it." In a private letter to Burnes, Elphinstone could see no prospect of maintaining Shah Shujá "in a poor, cold, strong, and remote country, among a turbulent people like the Afgháns," who would gladly join any invader to drive us out. "I never knew," he added, "a close alliance between a civilized and an uncivilized State that did not end in mutual hatred in three years;" and Afghán hatred could only be embittered by our alliance with Ranjit Singh. Even in India the prevalent feeling among our countrymen was dead against the policy of setting up a weak-minded, pig-headed prince of the Bourbon or Stuart type, who had been spurned out by his own people, in the place of a ruler who had held his ground so ably against all assailants for twelve years past. The strategic objections to a long march across the deserts of Sind and the rugged mountains of Biluchistán were enhanced by the obvious need of [redacted]g the Sind Amirs, in the teeth of existing treaties, to aid the [redacted]e of our troops through their country, with a due provision of

carriage and supplies. Our hold on the Panjáb depended mainly on the life of an old drunkard, whose death might be announced at any moment. Shah Shujá himself had repeatedly avowed his unwillingness to reappear among his former subjects as a king who owed his crown to British bayonets and British guns.*

Nothing, however, could stay the panic-stung zeal of those who had already decided that Russian scheming could be baffled only by the fall of Dost Mohammad. To our troops in Upper India the prospect of a campaign in unknown regions promised an agreeable change from the uneventful round of life in cantonments. It mattered little with whom they might be going to war, so long as fighting brought them a release from daily drills, from office drudgery, a chance of honour, promotion, at the worst of increased pay in the field, and prize-money or batta on their return home. On the 1st of October Lord Auckland issued from Simla a Manifesto in which—to use the words of Sir Herbert Edwardes—"the views and conduct of Dost Mohammad were misrepresented with a hardihood which a Russian statesman might have envied."† In this remarkable document, paralleled only by the manifesto of a later viceroy against the son of Dost Mohammad—the Amir of Kábul was charged with making "a sudden and unprovoked attack" on our ancient ally, Ranjit Singh; with "urging the most unreasonable pretensions" to Pesháwar; with avowing schemes of "aggrandizement and ambition injurious to the security and peace of the frontiers of India," and with giving "his undisguised support to the Persian designs in Afghánistán," in utter disregard of the views and interests of the British Government. The Persian attack on Herát was described as "a most unjustifiable and cruel aggression," to which the Kandáhár princes had openly lent their aid. As the Barakzai brothers were "ill-fitted under any circumstances to aid us in our just and necessary measures of national defence," the Governor-General had determined to espouse the cause of Shah Shujá-ul-Mulk, whose popularity in Afghánistán had been already established, and whose power would be supported "against foreign interference, and factious opposition by a British Army." In accordance with the Tripartite Treaty the integrity of Herát and the independence of the Sind Amirs would be guaranteed. After some fine words about freedom of commerce, "the just influence of the British Government" in Central Asia, the establishment of tranquillity on the West

* Kaye's "War in Afghanistan;" Durand's "First Afghan War."

† "Life of Sir Henry Lawrence."

frontier, and so forth, Lord Auckland promised that, as soon as the independence and integrity of Afghánistán had been established under Shah Shujá, the British Army would be withdrawn.

How false were some of these statements, how misleading nearly all, the reader has already seen. Dost Mohammad made no unprovoked attack upon Ranjit Singh, urged no unreasonable pretensions, persisted only in earnest efforts to win our friendship on almost any terms. The Shah of Persia had ample cause for marching against Herát, and had he succeeded, that city would have been made over to the Kandáhár princes, who would have held it in the interests of their Barakzai brother reigning at Kábul. Shah Shujá's popularity existed only in his own boastful utterances, and in the assumptions of a few credulous partisans. The very opening statement of the Manifesto, that Lord Auckland's orders for the assemblage of an army had been issued with the concurrence of the Supreme Council, was a simple falsehood, for the members of that Council sent home a formal remonstrance against the consummation of a policy on which their opinions had never been recorded. In fairness to Lord Auckland it may be granted that he viewed the whole question through a haze of fear, suspicion, and prejudice, which blinded him alike to the perilous folly and the marvellous injustice of the game which some of his advisers were bent on playing.

All through September and October regiments and batteries were marching from their several stations towards the sandy plain of the Satlaj at Firózpur, while a separate column of troops from Bombay was preparing to cross the water to the coast of Sind. Before the Bengal troops had reached their common camping-ground, Lord Auckland had publicly announced on the 8th of November the retreat of the Persian army from Herát. After a siege of nearly ten months, conspicuous for the splendid courage and self-reliance with which Eldred Pottinger, a young officer of the Bombay Artillery, inspired and virtually conducted the defence, Mohammad Shah had broken up his camp on the 9th of September and begun his march back to Teherán. Alarmed by [redacted]he news of a landing effected by 500 Bombay Sepoys on an [redacted]and in the Persian Gulf, news which rumour magnified into an [redacted]ed invasion of Persia itself, and warned by Colonel Stoddart, [redacted]neil's envoy to his camp, of the measures planned by the [redacted]sh Government for compelling him to raise the siege, the [redacted]had at length agreed to meet our wishes by throwing up an [redacted]ise which had cost him heavily both in money and men.

From that moment Lord Auckland was left without a decent excuse for sending a British army into Afghánistán. There was nothing more to fear from Russian aggression masked by Persian arms. It was easy then to draw back from a foolhardy enterprise, to which nothing in the Tripartite Treaty had committed us; against which Shah Shujá had so often protested, and towards which no solid help could be expected from Ranjit Singh; for our shrewd "ancient ally" would certainly have refused a passage for our troops across his territory into the passes that led straight to Kábul. But Lord Auckland's hour of repentance had not yet come. The same General Order which announced the safety of Herát, informed the world that the intended expedition would still be carried out, with a view to the establishment of a friendly power in Eastern Afghánistán, and of "a permanent barrier against schemes of aggression upon our north-west frontier."

By the last week of November the army of the Indus, 14,000 strong, with about 6,000 of Shah Shujá's levies officered by our own countrymen, had assembled at Firózpur under Sir Henry Fane, Commander-in-Chief for Bengal. But that fine old soldier no longer cared to command an army about to be reduced in numbers, and destined for a smaller object than the relief of Herát. Ill-health and other causes decided him to resign his post and prepare for his homeward voyage. Of the troops assembled under his orders one column, about 9,500 strong, commanded by Sir Willoughby Cotton, was at once warned for active service, while the remainder were to be held in reserve at Ludiána and Firózpur. The command of a Bombay column, 5,600 strong, was entrusted to Sir John Keane, who was to take command of the whole force as soon as the two columns came together. The Shah's contingent would make its own way through Sind in some sort of concert with Willoughby's division.

A grand meeting at Firózpur between the Governor-General and the one-eyed Lion of the Panjáb served as a showy prelude to the serious business on which we had embarked so lightly. Reviews, festivities, and splendid pageants lit up the close of November, and the first days of the following month.* On 10th December Cotton's army began its march down the left of the Satlaj towards Sind, encumbered by a train of camels, and 38,000 camp-followers. The roundabout selected for its advance to Kandáhár and Kábul, by way of and the Bolán Pass, lay through more than a thousan

* The most beautiful season of the year in Upper India, cold and b

ill-watered plains and rugged mountains, peopled either by lawless tribes or ill-wishers to our rule. From the first its progress depended partly on its own supplies, partly on such help as the rulers of the country traversed could be induced to afford. For the latter purpose it became needful to employ the usual methods adopted by the strong towards the weak. The friendly Khán of Bháwalpur had to be bullied and lectured by our political agents into furnishing the supplies demanded for our troops. Towards the reluctant Amirs of Sind yet stronger measures had to be taken. It was no time to stand on scruples, to respect the faith of treaties which the need of the moment had rendered obsolete. Colonel Pottinger, our Resident at Haidrabád, informed the Amirs that "the article of the treaty"—made in 1832—"which prohibits the using of the Indus for the conveyance of military stores must necessarily be suspended during the course of these operations." They were threatened with the loss of their "independence, if not of their rule," in the event of resistance to our demands, or of any further intrigues with Persia. With a brutal frankness worthy of Napoleon, they were assured that "neither the ready power to crush and annihilate them, nor the will to call it into action, was wanting, if it appeared requisite, however remotely, for the safety of the Anglo-Indian Empire, or frontier." Under the pressure applied by Burnes, Pottinger, and Macnaghten, backed up by the stronger persuasions of an actual march in force on their own capital, and of the *Wellesley's* attack on Karáchi, the hapless Princes yielded to their hard fate. The island-fortress of Bakhar on the Indus, between Sakhar and Rohri, was surrendered for the time into British keeping; the tribute money assigned to Shah Shujá under the Tripartite Treaty was at length paid over; and on the 6th February, 1839, the Amirs agreed by a new treaty to pay three lakhs a year for the support of a small British garrison in Sind.

That difficulty thus got over, Keane resumed his march from Kotri up the right bank of the Indus, while Cotton, retracing his steps to Rohri, made the best of his way across the river to [illegible]ikápur, where the Shah's force had long been waiting for [illegible]. From Shaikápur on the 22nd of February Cotton's force set [illegible]r Dádar, near the Bolán Pass, on a dreary march of 171 [illegible]96 of which lay through a broad desert, dotted by a few [illegible] and almost barren alike of water and forage even of the [illegible]ort.* No attempt had been made to store up supplies

* Durand's "First Afghan War."

beforehand along the road for a force which, including camp-followers, numbered 80,000, besides 3,000 horses and 30,000 camels. By the 10th of March Cotton found himself at Dádar with an army weakened by sickness, and further disabled by heavy losses in camels, horses, baggage, and camp-followers. After a few days' rest his troops on the 16th began their toilsome march up the stony gorges of the Bolán Pass, which wound for sixty miles through the desolate mountain-barrier that divides Sind from Bilúchistán. Hundreds of camels fell dead or dying during the seven days that passed before the troops emerged into the welcome verdure of the Shál Valley. Bilúchi marauders harassed the rear brigade, and lost no opportunity of plundering the baggage. Three days later Keane reached Kwatta, in the highland valley of Shál, where his tired, half-starved soldiers had to await the arrival of the Bombay column and Shah Shujá's troops.

By the 6th of April the combined forces were encamped around Kwatta, under the chief command of Sir John Keane. With a total loss of 20,000 camels, of much baggage, and many camp-followers, they had got thus far on the road to Kábul, only to find themselves placed on half rations before they had entered on the real business of the campaign. The scanty supplies obtainable from the Shál valley were soon exhausted, and the Khán of K[illegible]lát, whose country yielded little grain and only a few thousand s[illegible]eep, could do little to help us, even if he would. Nothing rem[illegible]ned but to push on to Kandáhár through a tumbled sea of bare, [illegible]eak, rugged hills, cloven by a pass shorter, but not less formidabl[illegible] than the Bolán. The guns, great and small, were dragged by sheer strength of human will and muscle up the stony steeps of the snow-capped Khojak. Happily no enemy, except stray groups of marauding Afgháns or Bilúchis, disputed our advance; but the loss of baggage, tents, camels, and warlike stores was very great, and both men and horses were worn out with hunger, thirst, and fatigue, when on the 26th of April the main body arrived before Kandáhár.*

On the 4th of May the last of the Bombay troops came into camp in the fertile valley on which stands the capital of [illegible]n Afghánistán. The Kandáhár chiefs had fled from that [illegible] first sounds of a British advance from Kwatta. On [illegible] grand parade was got up in honour of Shah Shujá, wh[illegible] entrance into the city had been hailed, according to [illegible] with "feelings nearly amounting to adoration." No [illegible]

* In one march alone the cavalry brigade lost fifty-eight h[illegible]

certainly displayed themselves on the 8th of May, when barely a hundred Afgháns came to witness the ceremony of installing their new king. Whatever liking the people of Kandáhár might have retained for a son of Ahmad Shah was cooled, if not quenched, by the sight of those Farangi invaders, whose bayonets had brought him home.*

After a halt of two months, Keane, on the 27th of June, pursued his march towards Ghazni, leaving a sufficient garrison at Kandáhár, and leaving also the heavy guns which he had brought thither with so much difficulty through the Bolán and Khojak Passes. On the 21st of July his troops came within sight of the famous stronghold whence the terrible Mahmúd, more than eight centuries earlier, had issued forth again and again to overthrow the armies and harry the plains of Hindustan. Too late Keane discovered the real strength of the place which he had been taught to regard as indefensible. But time was precious, provisions were running short, and in his camp were skilful and daring engineers and soldiers ready for any desperate work. Guided by information received from a nephew of Dost Mohammad, the Chief Engineer, Thompson, proposed to blow in the Kábul Gate and carry the fortress by a sudden assault. His plan was accepted with all its hazards. In the early dawn of the 23rd of July, an explosion party, led by Henry Durand, laid the powder-bags and fired the train. At a given signal Dennie's stormers poured through the broken gate, Sale's column followed close upon their steps, and after a little hand-to-hand fighting, Ghazni was won. The enemy fled from the citadel in wild panic, and their leader, Prince Haidar, a son of Dost Mohammad, fell a prisoner into our hands.†

This bold, though hazardous, stroke sealed, for a time, the fate of Dost Mohammad. He had sent his son, Akbar Khán, to hinder the advance of an army which Prince Timur, son of Shah Shujá, was leading with the help of Colonel Wade through the Khaibar Pass to Jalálabad. Akbar was now recalled to aid in the defence of Kábul. The Amir himself would have made one last stand at Argandi, twenty-five miles from Kábul on the road. He implored his followers on the Korán to be true

[redacted]

his own countrymen," says Sir G. Lawrence, "came in to pledge and the country was clearly against us"—("Forty Years' Service in

† the assault as told by Durand himself shows how fearfully narrow separated success from failure,

to their salt a little longer; to join him in "one last charge against those Farangi dogs." But they had no heart for what seemed a losing game, and Akbar returned only to cover his father's flight into the wilds of the Hindú Kúsh. Even then the fears or the malice of the Amir's persecutors dogged his steps. A small body of Indian and Afghán horsemen, led by the dashing James Outram, rode off in hot chase of the royal fugitive. But the treachery of Háji Khán, the Afghán leader, who acted as guide to the hunting-party, thwarted all their best efforts; and when Outram reached Bámián on the Balkh frontier, Dost Mohammad was still some marches ahead on his way to Bokhára.*

On the 7th of August Shah Shujá, glittering with jewels and mounted on a white charger, was escorted in triumph by Keane's troops through the streets of Kábul into his citadel-palace, the Bála Hissár. No sounds or signs of popular welcome heralded his approach; of those who came out to stare at the passing show, hardly one greeted his new sovereign with a common salaam. "It was more" says Kaye, "like a funeral procession than the entry of a king into the capital of his restored dominions."

The usual honours and rewards were bestowed by a grateful Government on their victorious troops. Sir John Keane obtained his peerage, Macnaghten a baronetcy, and Wade a knighthood. The same honour had already been allotted to Burnes, who consented to serve for a time under Macnaghten, now established as Resident at the Shah's Court. The moment seemed to have come when the Army of the Indus might withdraw from Afghán territory in accordance with the pledges of the Simla Manifesto. But neither to Sir William Macnaghten nor to Lord Auckland did such a means of escape from a false position recommend itself. The death of Ranjit Singh in June removed one solid guarantee for the good behaviour of our Sikh allies, and Shah Shujá was loath to dispense with the aid of British bayonets while Dost Mohammad remained at large. The demon of Russophobia hungered for yet more victims, and the Nemesis of our wrong-doing had already begun its work. Lord Auckland decided to withdraw a part of the invading army, leaving strong garrisons at Kandáhár and Kábul, Ghazni and Jalálabad.

In the middle of September the Bombay column under General Wiltshire began its homeward march. On its way down to Sind it was ordered by Macnaghten to occupy Kalát in requital of

* It may have been fortunate for the hunters that they missed their prey, for the Amir's escort still numbered some 2,000 staunch Afgháns.

Mehráb Khán's alleged disloyalty and bad faith. This sentence against a ruler guilty only of powerlessness to restrain his turbulent subjects was duly carried out. On the 15th of October Kalát was stormed and captured, after a desperate struggle, in which the brave old Khan and his chief officers fell, fighting stubbornly to the last. By that time Keane himself with the scanty residue of the Bengal troops was quietly marching down to Pesháwar by way of Jalálabad and the Khaibar Pass. He had hardly emerged from the gloomy gorges of the Sulaimán Hills when the highlanders of the Khaibar renewed their late attacks upon the little garrison of Ali Masjid, a fort commanding the eastern outlet from the Pass. After some lively skirmishing, checked by the arrival of succours from Pesháwar and Jalálabad, the Khaibari guardians of the Pass were induced by Macnaghten's agent, Captain Mackeson, to refrain from further molestation in return for a yearly subsidy of £8,000.*

One step in a foolish course invariably leads to many more. We had replaced Shah Shujá on the throne whence he had been driven nearly thirty years before. The "military promenade" to Kábul had been achieved at some cost to the Treasury, but with no great loss of soldiers' lives. But to conquer the country was one thing, to assure its acquiescence in a rule propped up by foreign bayonets was quite another. The Afgháns are a proud, war-loving, bigoted, unruly people, always ready to quarrel among themselves, to take up arms for revenge or mere plunder, to carry on blood-feuds between tribe and tribe, family and family, for generations. But they are just as ready to combine on fit occasion against invaders of an alien race and a hostile creed. These Montenegrins of Central Asia might be cowed for the moment into sullen submission to overwhelming force. But how long would that submission last after the withdrawal of half that force, and the scattering of the remainder over a country larger than Spain, more rugged than Switzerland itself?

For a time, indeed, things went on smoothly enough, with something of "the torrent's smoothness ere it dash below." If the Shah reigned, Macnaghten and his officers governed. Our soldiers acted as the Shah's police; English officers made their voices heard in the civil government; English gold was freely spent towards the maintenance of the new rule. Macnaghten's fussy ambition, spurred on by a consuming dread of Russia, knew no curb. He

* Durand's "First Afghan War." A certain amount of black mail had been paid to the clansmen of the Khaibar by successive rulers at Kábul.

had already sent Major D'Arcy Todd to Herát in order to improve our new-born friendship for the villanous Shah Kámrán, who agreed for a heavy bribe to do all that was asked of him, while he and his like-minded Minister, Yar Mohammad, quietly intrigued against us at Teherán. Todd in his turn despatched Captain James Abbott to the Usbek Khán of Khiva, the Khárism of an older day, lying between the Oxus and the Sea of Aral. The Khán, who was momently dreading a Russian invasion from Orenburg in requital for the raids of his man-stealing Turkomans, listened courteously to the Englishman's overtures and presently deputed him on a mission of amity to the Tzar himself. Captain Richmond Shakespeare, who replaced Abbott at Khiva, had the pleasure of conducting to Orenburg four hundred Russian slaves whom the Khán had found it politic to set free. It was fortunate for these poor fellows that their deliverance from a cruel bondage preceded the utter collapse of the expedition which Perofski led out from the Caspian towards Khiva in November, 1839.*

Another emissary, the ill-starred Arthur Conolly, was sent off in the following year to Kokán, another of those Khánats or Settled States that fringe or dot the vast expanse of rolling plain or steppes watered mainly by two rivers, the Sír and the Amú, the Jaxartes and Oxus of former days; and thinly peopled by roving tribes of Turkomans, Usbeks, Kirghiz, and other branches of the great Mongol race. It was from Kokán, then called Firghána, that Bábar had issued three centuries before to found, after many strange turns of fortune, the Moghal Empire of Hindustan. From Kokán the eager, high-souled Conolly afterwards went on to Bokhára, another of the Khánats aforesaid, in hopes of rescuing Macneil's envoy, Colonel Stoddart, from the long and cruel imprisonment to which the merciless tyrant then ruling the central seat of great Timur's empire had doomed the victim of his own indiscretions and the Amir's invincible distrust. Macnaghten for his part would have used stronger measures to secure Stoddart's release; but Lord Auckland's courage would not go the length of ordering a campaign in the heart of Central Asia in behalf of an agent who utterly refused to owe his freedom to the intervention of a Russian Elchi. Conolly's arrival served only to inflame the Amir's ill-feeling towards the conquerors of Afghánistán.

* Perofski's columns set out from Orenburg just as winter was setting in. Cold and hardship stopped him short in the middle of the steppes, and sent him back with heavy losses in men and camels.

The letters he had written to the Queen of England remained unanswered; and Dr. Lord's aggressive doings in the regions bordering the Oxus had filled him with fresh alarm, now deepened by the approach of an English stranger from the hostile Khánat of Kokán. Conolly reached Bokhára only to become a prisoner in the hands of a potentate from whose mercy he had nothing to hope.

In Doctor Lord of the Company's Medical Service the Governor-General's Envoy had found a willing helpmate in the unprofitable game of sowing the wind. In the autumn of 1839 Macnaghten had sent Lord with a few hundred Sepoys and six light guns to keep the peace in the Afghán country beyond the Hindú Kúsh. Lord kept it for a time by a display of force and folly which could only issue in fresh embroilments. The deposition of a petty chief in the Saigan Valley provoked the ill-will of the neighbouring Usbek chiefs, and converted the Khán of Bokhára from Dost Mohammad's jailer into his ally. Set free by the very hands that had lately doomed him to a hopeless imprisonment, the fugitive Amir of Kábul straightway set himself to renew the fight for his lost kingdom. His old friend, the Chief of Kulum, who had sheltered him and his family on their flight from Kábul, readily gave him what help he could. The Usbeks flocked by thousands to the standard of a leader who hoped to rid the country of the hated infidel, and whose name had still the power to draw over to his side a large number of Afghán soldiers serving under the British flag.

For Dost Mohammad, however, the hour of triumph was not yet come. By the middle of September, 1839, the brave Colonel Dennie had taken command of the reinforced troops at Bámián. With 300 sabres, 500 bayonets, and two guns, he marched out on the 18th against Dost Mohammad's 6,000 horse and foot. The fire of Mackenzie's guns and the bold advance of our sturdy Gorkhas and Sepoys soon threw the enemy into utter confusion, while Hart's and Anderson's troopers turned the confusion into a hopeless rout. Dost Mohammad with his two sons, Akbar and Afzal Khán, and a small remnant of his followers, fled over the hills eastward into the Kohistán, where he could still hope for aid from many of the chiefs who had just been tendering a feigned submission to the new ruler. To watch his movements and counteract his designs, a force was despatched from Kábul under Sale and Burnes, who harassed the country of the hostile chiefs, taking some of their forts, destroying their villages, and beating up their

camps. At Parwandára, on the 2nd of November, Sale came up with Dost Mohammad himself, strongly posted on the rough ground sloping up to the adjacent hills. Before Sale's advance the enemy kept retreating. The British commander pushed his cavalry forward from both flanks to cut off the retreat. Two squadrons of the 2nd Bengal Cavalry soon came within easy reach of two hundred Afghán horsemen whom Dost Mohammad was leading off the field. Turning at his command, the Afgháns prepared to meet their pursuers. Fraser gave the word to charge; but his men, smitten with unaccountable panic, wavered, fell back, and fled like scared sheep. Thus deserted, these few English officers dashed on into the enemy's ranks, resolved to hew their way through or die. Three of them, including Dr. Lord, were killed, and two severely wounded. Among the few survivors was Fraser himself, who, covered with blood, his sword-arm disabled, rode up to Sale and calmly reported his men's misconduct. For a time the Afgháns defiantly kept their ground until the advance of our guns and infantry warned them quietly to withdraw.

With characteristic rashness Burnes at once wrote off to Macnaghten, urging him to recall Sale's force and concentrate all his troops at Kábul. An hour or two after the receipt of this letter, as the envoy was returning from his evening ride, an Afghán horseman rode up and told him that the Amir, Dost Mohammad, was close at hand. In another moment the Amir himself came up, dismounted, and offered his sword to Macnaghten, whose protection he claimed as one who had met his foes in fair fight, but felt the uselessness of further resistance. Returning the sword to its owner, the envoy begged him to remount, and they rode together into Kábul, the Amir talking freely by the way about his late adventures, and asking many questions concerning those of his family who had already found safe shelter in the hands of our countrymen. During his stay at Kábul the captive Barakzai was treated with every courtesy, not only by the leading officers of the garrison, who admired him as much as they despised Shah Shujá, but above all by the same Macnaghten who had just been proposing to set a price upon the Amir's head, and had lately written to Lord Auckland that "no mercy should be shown to the man who is the author of all the evils that are now distracting the country."* In a very different strain did the envoy now address his chief, pleading for liberal treatment of the noble prisoner,

* Durand's "First Afghan War;" Kaye's "War in Afghanistan."

who, on the 12th of November, was to set out for Ludiána in charge of a strong escort commanded by Sir Willoughby Cotton. "The Shah had no claim on us; we had no hand in depriving him of his kingdom, whereas we ejected the Dost, who never offended us, in support of our policy of which he is the victim."* Such were the words in which Macnaghten described the very policy which he had been among the first to advocate, and the most resolute to carry out.

Thus far, at any rate, the great game he loved to talk of had not greatly prospered. All his bribes, and all Todd's arguments, had failed to reconcile Prince Kámrán to the proposed admission of a British contingent into Herát. More than once had Macnaghten urged the Governor-General to annex Herát by force, and to punish the perfidy of the Sikhs, whose emissaries were at work in the Bála Hissár itself, by occupying Pesháwar, if not the whole of the Panjáb. But calmer counsels prevailed at Calcutta, and the envoy had to chew the cud of his annoyance at all such proofs of a "drivelling beneath contempt." He could only sigh for "a Wellesley or a Hastings," as if either of those statesmen would have lent himself for one moment to the mad enterprises of a political fanatic, who saw nothing but the goal of his wild desires.

Meanwhile troubles had arisen in other districts held or traversed by our troops. The hardy Ghilzai tribes of the hill-country between Ghazni and Kandáhár, who had never brooked a ruler, Afghán or other, for ages past, and who lived mainly on plunder and heavy tolls wrung from passing caravans, now saw their freedom endangered, their old rights and perquisites curtailed by the white-faced strangers, who bore themselves like masters in a land that was not, that never should be, theirs. In the spring of 1840 some two or three thousand of these proud highlanders charged fiercely at the guns and Sepoys of Anderson's little force, which Nott had sent forth against them from Kandáhár. Swept down by showers of grape, their horsemen checked again and again by Spence's bayonets, the assailants sullenly withdrew, leaving two hundred dead on the field. Nott's energy in other directions improved the lessons taught by this defeat, and inclined the Ghilzai chiefs to accept the bargain which Macnaghten at length saw fit to offer. For a yearly subsidy of

* Marshman's "History of India." From Ludiána he was sent on to Calcutta, where he became the honoured guest of the Governor-General, and often played at chess with Miss Eden

£3,000 they agreed to refrain from attacking convoys and otherwise disturbing the peace of the highways.

About the same time serious risings of Marri, Kákar, and other Bilúchi tribes were reported from all parts of the country between Kwatta and Kalát. Several small bodies of British and Shah's Sepoys suffered terrible mishaps from foes who knew how to take them at a disadvantage. Kwatta itself was for a moment in imminent danger of assault. The new Khán of Kalát, our own nominee, was driven from his throne by a successful revolt among his own subjects, headed by the son of that Mehráb Khán who had died fighting the year before in defence of his capital and his throne. Even at Dádar, on the Sind side of the Bolán Pass, the courage of our troops was sharply tested in repelling a fierce attack led by the same prince, Nasír Khán. Not till November was Kalát re-occupied by some of Nott's troops. A month later Nasír Khán, after a crushing defeat from Marshall's column, found himself a helpless fugitive in the wilds of Bilúchistán.* Once more there seemed for the moment a lull in the affairs of Shah Shujá's kingdom. Macnaghten's sanguine spirit mistook the lull for a settled calm. In spite of appearances, of warnings from many quarters, from soldiers, for instance, like Nott, and "politicals" like Todd and Rawlinson, the Envoy still pinned his faith on Shah Shujá as the ablest man in his kingdom, and the most loyal of allies; still fondled his absurd belief in the power of British gold and bayonets to reconcile Shah Shujá's countrymen to the rule of a mere puppet, surrounded and set in play by worthless favourites and the hired tools of foreign infidels. He would not hear a word said against the Shah, whom Nott and other competent observers already accused of plotting with his fellow-tribesmen to get rid of his English friends. Had his avowed wishes been always equal to commands, Nott himself, the ablest officer in the country, the man who by right of merit and long service ought to have replaced Cotton at Kábul, would have been summarily recalled from Kandáhár.

* Durand's "First Afghan War."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BURSTING OF THE AFGHÁN BUBBLE.

BEFORE the end of 1840, the lull of which we have spoken had begun to stir and freshen towards a gale. A rule administered by greedy upstarts and enforced by the presence of foreign bayonets drove even the Shah's most powerful adherents into secret plotting, erelong into open revolt. A policy which excluded the Kháns or chiefs of his own Duráni tribe from all their former power and influence could not but deepen the growing disaffection. They had borne much in hopes of an early end to the sojourn of British troops and officers in their sovereign's country. But that end seemed no nearer now than a year ago. One of the chiefs, named Aktar Khán, had a special grudge against the government which had rejected his claims to the lordship of Zamindáwar. Summoning his followers to the field, he gained, on December 29, a signal victory over the royalist troops. But a few days later the force which Nott had sent out against him from Kandáhár drove the insurgents with heavy loss from their position, and the snows of winter sent the survivors back for a time to the shelter of their own homes. In the following February, Macnaghten, writing from Jalálabad, declared the present tranquillity of the whole country to be "perfectly miraculous," as if an Afghán winter could not of itself explain the seeming marvel.

The miraculous tranquillity disappeared with the melting of the winter snows. Even in February Colonel Shelton had been preparing to lead a force from Kábul against bodies of insurgents in the neighbouring country. In March the storming of a small fort in the Tarnak Valley and the measures taken for strengthening our post at Kalát-i-Ghilzai provoked a formidable mustering of the Ghilzai tribes around Kandáhár. On the 9th of May they attacked a strong convoy marching towards Kalát-i-Ghilzai under one of Nott's best officers, Colonel Wymer. After five hours of sharp fighting with our disciplined Sepoys and well-served guns, the enemy drew off their shattered forces, and left the road free

for the victors' advance. By that time Aktar Khán, who had meanwhile sworn allegiance to the Shah, had been emboldened by promises of secret aid from Herát to renew the game of armed insurrection. His Duráni clansmen rallied to his standard, eager for plunder and revenge. Woodburn's troops advancing to the Helmand early in July, had to sustain a long day's fight with a numerous and resolute foe; a fight in which his own progress was sorely hindered by the cowardice or the treachery of the Shah's Jánbáz horse, before his wearied soldiers knew themselves masters of the field.

Six weeks later the Jánbáz retrieved their character in a successful fight between Griffin's column and some 5,000 of Aktar Khán's Duránis, strongly posted behind the garden walls of Kháwind. Safdar Jang, a son of Shah Shujá, led his horsemen boldly to the charge of a foe already yielding ground, and turned their disorder into utter rout. Once more there set in a lull which deceived no one at Kandáhár. Macnaghten, however, could not help crowing over the "cheering prospects" which met his deluded eyes. "From Mukúr to the Khaibar Pass all is content and tranquillity, and wherever we Europeans go, we are received with respect and attention and welcome."

The Afgháns he looked upon as perfect children, who ought to be treated as such. The Duráni chiefs were only pouting for the loss of power which they did not know how to use, and which had therefore been transferred to scholars of our own choice. "If we put our naughty boy in the corner, the rest will be terrified." In other words, if Aktar Khán could only be caught and hanged by way of example, his followers would cease to trouble us any more.* As for Shah Shujá, he was "deservedly popular" with all classes except the Kháns, who were "too contemptible to be cared about."

Very different was the view which a cooler-headed, keener-eyed critic took of the position. Nott was no courtier to suit his phrases to his company, but a brave, blunt soldier, with a quick temper and a cool, wise head. The Envoy he regarded as a mischievous enthusiast, and his staff of politicals as a set of meddlesome bunglers whose conduct had "ruined our cause, and bared the throat of every European in this country to the sword and knife of the revengeful Afghán and bloody Bilúch." Unless several regiments were quickly sent up, not a man, he thought,

* Durand's "First Afghan War;" Kaye's "War in Afghanistan."

would be "left to note the fate of his comrades." "Nothing but force," he added, "will ever make them submit to the hated Shah Shujá, who is most certainly as great a scoundrel as ever lived."* The old soldier's sweeping strictures on a class of officers whose zeal was not always tempered by sound judgment or practical training covered a certain kernel of hard truth. Nott's estimate of the Shah himself tallied nearly enough, when stripped of all superlatives, with that formed by Major Rawlinson. How far the actual future verified his forecast, the reader may be left to judge for himself. His desire for more troops reflected the very feeling implied in Macnaghten's own words: "We must have force; we have abandoned all hope of forming a national army."

On the 20th of August, 1841, the Envoy, in a private letter, declared that the country was "perfectly quiet from Dan to Beersheba." He who thus wrote was even then arranging with Nott for the despatch of a strong force from Kandáhár to chastise insurgents in the North-Western Provinces. Nott himself in September took command of a column whose strength overawed resistance. One chief alone, Akram Khán, refused to come in. Hunted down by an English officer under the guidance of a traitorous Afghán, the unlucky Khán was captured, brought back to Kandáhár, and handed over to Prince Timur, who, prompted by Macnaghten, had him blown from a gun. "Revenge and wrong," says the poet, "bring forth their kind." The Nemesis of violence and wrong-doing was already dogging the steps of our doomed countrymen in Afghánistán. In his eagerness to "make an example of one naughty boy," Macnaghten displayed once more that tigerish instinct which lurks in the nature of most men. He forgot that he had to reckon with a whole nation of tigers, ready at a moment's notice to spring upon their destined prey.

For the moment, however, nothing disturbed the Envoy's peace of mind. His attempts, indeed, to make British influence supreme in Herát had been thwarted some months before by Todd's withdrawal thence, and the consequent withholding of his usual subsidy from Prince Kámrán. In Bokhára, Stoddart and Conolly still languished helpless in unseemly bonds. Aktar Khan was still at large, and Dost Mohammad's ablest son, Akbar, had found a safe shelter in the highlands of Bámian; but for the moment there was no enemy in the open field. The Russians had

* Durand's "First Afghan War."

abandoned their march on Khiva. "The noses of the Duráni chiefs had been brought to the grindstone," and Afghánistán was "as quiet as an Indian district." Our countrymen at Kábul were enjoying the cool sunshine of a bracing autumn in the high mountain-valley on which their cantonments stood. The wives and families of the married men had come up thither to cheer their husbands' and fathers' hearts, and to lend a more tenderly English aspect to the life that stirred around them. The Envoy himself was gladly looking forward to the hour when he might hand over his post at Kábul to his impatient subaltern, Sir Alexander Burnes, in order to take up his new appointment as Governor of Bombay.

One thing only delayed his departure—a mere matter of a few thousand pounds, a paltry-seeming item in the gross expenditure of the past three years. The Court of Directors had seen with anxiety, at last with dismay, the growing costliness of a policy which they could neither check nor guide, which, after swallowing up the accumulated savings of Lord W. Bentinck's time, had involved India in a further outlay of a million and a quarter a year. Lord Melbourne's Government had caught the alarm in their turn. In more than one letter from the Secret Committee of the India House—the mouthpiece, be it remembered, of the Board of Control—Lord Auckland was enjoined to consider seriously all the difficulties and dangers of his Afghán enterprise, to choose, in short, between a speedy retreat from Afghánistán and a large addition to the troops there quartered. Far better would it be to make "frank confession of complete failure" by quitting the country altogether, than to go on trying to bolster up the Shah's weak rule by means of a small British force, or by "the mere influence of British Residents." To these letters, which reached him early in 1841, the Governor-General replied in March, by pleading several reasons, all alike fallacious, for holding his ground at whatever cost, in spite of the Shah's acknowledged weakness, of our own unpopularity, of the increasing drain upon the Indian Treasury, and of other admissions which told most heavily against his own views. A loan was straightway opened in Calcutta, and Macnaghten was invited, even urged, to devise some means of cutting down expenses in Afghánistán. If nothing else were done, he might at any rate curtail the subsidies hitherto granted to a number of Afghán chiefs in lieu of their ancient privilege of black-mail.

In spite of his own objections to a course so penny-wise, the Envoy yielded to the pressure applied not only by Lord Auckland

and the Home Government, but by his own assistant, Burnes. Summoning the chiefs of the Eastern Ghilzai tribes to Kábul in the last days of September, he told them of his intention to reduce their stipends by about three thousand pounds. They listened without a murmur of dissent to the fiat of a minister whose word they had hitherto trusted.* But they went home with war in their hearts against a Government so false to its own pledges. They began at once to plot with their fellow-sufferers in the Khaibar Hills, in the Kohistán, and around Kábul itself, for the Envoy's projected savings touched many persons even in the Shah's own Court. In a few days it was known at Kábul that the Ghilzais were up between that city and Jalálabad, that the work of plunder had begun, and that all communication with India by way of the Khaibar was cut off.

To the Envoy, who had lately denounced the notion of abandoning the country as "an unparalleled political atrocity," a downright breach of faith, and "a cheat of the first magnitude," this sudden reduction of stipends seemed a matter of no moral importance. Unwise it might be at such a moment; but of its moral bearings, as judged in the light of former pledges, he had no truer conception than he had of the dangers involved in an outbreak, which might easily, he thought, be quelled by the troops at that moment returning to India under General Sale. Macnaghten could see only the "impudence" of the few hundred "rascals" who blocked the way through a pass not fifteen miles from Kábul. He was annoyed only that such a breeze should ruffle the peace of the country he was about to leave, and he felt sure that, this little outbreak once quelled, Afghánistán would become quieter than ever.†

Macnaghten might have learned something of the rocks ahead from the tale of perils encountered by an English officer on his way back to Pesháwar. On the 4th of October, Captain Gray had set out from Kábul under the escort of a friendly chief, Mohammad Azin Khán, and his four hundred followers. From Laghmán on the 7th he wrote off to Burnes a full account of the heavy skirmishing and the devious marches across a rugged hill country, by which his faithful guide and protector had brought him thus far on the road to India. With a courage, proof alike to the menaces and the bribes of Ghilzai insurgents, Azin Khán had saved the Englishman's small party from otherwise sure destruc-

* Durand. † Kaye.

tion. But with equal frankness he warned Gray that "all Afghánistán were determined to make one cause, and to murder or drive out every Farangi in the country," that Kábul itself was "ready to break out," and that even his own men could not be trusted in such a case.*

This letter Burnes duly received, and the Envoy himself must have been made aware of its contents. Pottinger also had not failed to warn him of dangers brewing in the Kohistán. He knew, too, that many of the Shah's own followers were leaving Kábul to join the insurgents, and that Hamza Khán, who had been sent to pacify the Ghilzai chiefs, was himself "at the bottom of the whole conspiracy." But nothing could clear his mind of its cherished belief in the partial character and speedy subsidence of the storm then raging. On the 9th of October one column of Sale's brigade marched out under Colonel Monteith from Kábul on its return to India. That very night Monteith's camp at Butkhák was assailed by a strong body of Afgháns. Sale himself marched next day with the 13th Foot to clear the passes beyond Butkhák. Not without sharp fighting did he force his way on the 12th through the defiles of the Kurd-Kábul. Leaving the 35th Sepoys to watch that pass from the valley beyond, he returned with the 13th Foot to Butkhák. On the night of the 17th Monteith and his brave Sepoys had to encounter a sudden—for some moments a murderous attack from a host of Afgháns, many of whom had a few hours before encamped beside our troops as friends. Monteith's isolation from all support had well-nigh cost him dear.

With fresh reinforcements from Kábul, Sale on the 20th hastened to rejoin Monteith. Two days later the combined force made its way with very little fighting over the Haft Kotal into the valley of Tazín. In fear of the blow which Sale would then have struck at his weakened enemy, the Ghilzais beguiled Macgregor, the political officer attached to Sale's column, into discussing the terms of an arrangement which would serve at least to stave off the immediate danger. Going apparently beyond his instructions, Macgregor yielded almost everything for which the Ghilzai chiefs had taken up arms. Their former stipends were to be restored; no chief was to be held answerable for robberies committed outside his own domains. In spite of this arrangement, Sale's onward march to Gandamak was harassed by several attacks from the mountaineers, whose chiefs had just made their submission; and

* Durand.

his rearguard suffered heavy losses in men and baggage before they issued from the gloomy gorge of Jagdalak.

Sale reached Gandamak on the 30th of October. His last brush with the Ghilzais Macnaghten took for "the expiring effort of the rebels." The same rosy cheerfulness coloured the Envoy's view of things at Kábul and in Kohistán. For some weeks past he had scoffed at Pottinger as an alarmist. The rebels in Kohistán would "sneak into their holes again" now that the Ghilzais were quieted, and all was tranquil on the side of Kandáhár. To the warnings that reached him from some of his own countrymen in Kábul the Envoy remained incurably deaf.* Burnes also had been warned of plots around him by Mohan Lal, the Múnshi attached to the British Residency; but in vain. Looking forward to his preferment, he could give no heed to tidings which in his less sanguine moods would have filled him with the deepest anxiety.

On the evening of the 1st of November, Burnes congratulated Macnaghten on his approaching departure from a country resting in profound peace. He little knew what the morrow was to bring forth, how few were the hours he had yet to live. That very night the chief men of all the Afghán tribes met together at the house of one of their number to settle the time and manner of wreaking their revenge on the accursed infidels who had invaded their country, trampled on their dearest rights and liberties, and dishonoured their women. Foremost among the speakers was Abdulla Khán, who, besides other grievances, owed Burnes a deadly grudge for a gross insult offered to his pride as an Afghán and a nobleman.† At his suggestion it was agreed that Burnes himself should be the first victim of an outbreak planned for the next morning.

In the early dawn of that fatal 2nd of November Burnes, who dwelt in the city itself, was aroused from his slumbers by a friendly Afghán, who urged him in vain to flee betimes from the coming danger. A second visitor brought the same tale, and pressed him with the same counsel. The minister expectant would not stir. With the roar of a great tumult already loudening in his ears, he

* Lieutenant John Conolly, of the Envoy's own staff, told him of a contemplated rising in the city, and of the fear inspired among the shopkeepers, who refused to sell goods to our people lest they should be murdered for favouring the Farangis.

† Learning that Abdullah Khán had been intriguing with the Ghilzai chiefs, Burnes sent him a scornful message, calling him a dog, and threatening to advise the Shah to cut off his ears—(Kaye's "War in Afghanistan").

wrote to the Envoy for support, in terms which made light of the approaching peril, and he sent to Abdulla Khán a conciliatory message, to which no friendly answer came back. Erelong an angry mob was surging in front of his house. Trusting to his powers of persuasion and hopeful of speedy help, if not from cantonments, at least from the Bála Hissár which overlooked the city, Burnes harangued the mob from an upper gallery. Their only answer was a yell of defiance, mingled with fierce demands for his own blood and that of his two companions. It was no time for further parleying. Shots were already flying about, and the English officers, aided by a small guard of Sepoys, had to fight for their lives. The first to fall in this unequal struggle was the brave Captain William Broadfoot, brother of him who had died the soldier's death a year before at Parwandára. While one band of insurgents attacked the Treasury next door, another party set fire to Burnes's stables.

It was now past eight o'clock, and no help had come from any quarter. In sheer despair Burnes offered his assailants a large bribe to spare his brother's life and his own. They only bade him come down into the garden. At length the two brothers, disguised as natives, were lured into the garden by a treacherous Kashmiri, who had sworn to guide them to a place of safety. He kept his oath by calling out the name of "Sikandar Burnes."* Forthwith the mob, led by one of their *mullahs*, or priests, rushed upon the doomed pair, who in a minute fell, cut to pieces by the long, sharp Afghán knives.

Thus perished in his prime, within a few hours, as it were, of the prize for which he had so long waited, the first conspicuous victim of the policy which he had once been foremost to condemn. That he paid the penalty of his own rashness, itself the outcome of an unstable nature easily swayed to either extreme of despondency and hopefulness, cannot be denied. But how came it that no help reached him even from the Bála Hissár? For such a miscarriage Shah Shujá was not to blame. At the first sounds of an outbreak he had ordered his regiment of Sepoys with two guns to march under Campbell, an adventurer in his service, to the scene of disturbance. Of the two roads he might have taken Campbell chose the worst. His troops, entangled in the narrow streets of the city, were driven back with heavy loss, and re-entered the citadel without their guns. By that time the work of slaughter had been completed, the Treasury sacked, the shops of friendly

* Sikandar is the well-known Eastern form of Alexander.

Hindus gutted, while the blaze of burning houses and the yells of mobs let loose for plunder and violence, told how thoroughly the insurgents had done their business. As the hours wore on, the excitement in the city spread, and the prompters of the outbreak, who had stayed at home all that morning, began to show themselves in public without fear of British vengeance.

That morning, within half an hour's march of Kábul, lay four or five thousand good British troops. A few hundred of them sent betimes into the city might have saved Burnes and his party from a violent death; would certainly have stamped out the little fire which erelong grew by sufferance into a widespread conflagration. But neither the Envoy nor General Elphinstone, who had the chief command of all our troops in Afghánistán, seemed alive to the real urgency of the moment. On the receipt of Burnes's note, Macnaghten indeed had lost no time in taking counsel with Elphinstone. But that officer, weakened by age and chronic illness, saw no need for special promptitude in a matter which the Envoy himself, misled, perhaps, by the tenor of Burnes's message, treated with a levity akin to madness.* One officer on the Envoy's staff, Captain George Lawrence, pleaded earnestly for the prompt despatch of a single regiment to the scene of conflict, and for a vigorous effort to seize the real authors of the attack on Burnes. His proposal was at once rejected as insane and utterly unfeasible.† Precious hours were lost before Brigadier Shelton brought a strong force of infantry and guns to the Bála Hissár from his camp on the neighbouring heights of Siyah Sang. Arriving in time to cover the retreat of the Shah's troops from the city, he did nothing to arrest the growing tumult beyond exchanging shots with the enemy's marksmen. In vain did the gallant Lawrence urge him to enter the city at once. "My force," he answered, "is inadequate, and you don't appear to know what street-firing is." To the amazement of the Shah himself, Shelton stood there inert and seemingly paralyzed, while the work of riot and plunder went on below, and two of our officers, Trevor and Mackenzie, were bravely defending their fortified posts in the city with a mere handful of resolute followers against crowds of assailants armed with far-shooting *jazails*.‡

* Macnaghten told Elphinstone that the city was "in a state of insurrection, but that he did not think much of it, and that it would shortly subside."

† Sir G. Lawrence's "Forty-three Years in India."

‡ Lawrence's "Forty-three Years in India." The jazail was a matchlock with a long barrel, which carried many hundred yards.

Each hour of such impunity gave new strength and purpose to the insurrection. Next morning, thousands of armed Afgháns flocked into Kábul from the surrounding villages. Even then a display of proper energy on our part might have checked the progress of armed revolt. The Kazilbash quarter of the city, peopled by Persian descendants of Nádar Shah's army, still held aloof from the rebel cause. Dost Mohammad's Barakzai clansmen were also watching the course of events. In swift compliance with orders received the day before from Kábul, the 37th Sepoys had just fought their way back to cantonments with brilliant success from their lonely post in the Kurd-Kábul valley. But this day also wore through without any serious effort to atone for past inaction. A strange paralysis had struck the military commanders. Macnaghten alone, who had once been a soldier before he entered the Company's Civil Service, showed something of a soldier's energy and wise boldness in the hour of trial. He had already ordered Sale to bring his brigade back with all speed to Kábul from Gandamak, and requested Nott to reinforce Elphinstone with all the troops he could spare from Kandáhár. As for his military colleagues, they were neither capable of acting wisely themselves nor clever enough to take up the counsels thrown out by younger or wiser heads. Elphinstone's brains were getting addled with time and bodily suffering; those of Shelton were smothered in the pipeclay so dear to a thorough martinet.* If Elphinstone dawdled when he should have been doing, if he always leant on others for advice and commonly took the worst or that of the last speaker, Shelton would neither take advice from any one nor strike out a bold line of action for himself.

It is needless in these pages, were it even possible, to detail what happened during the next few weeks. No attempt was made to relieve the posts which Trevor and Mackenzie held so stoutly for three days, until want of water and ammunition drove them out. No attempt was made to save from capture the commissariat fort which lay outside cantonments, and contained all kinds of stores for the whole of our troops. No attempt was made either to teach the enemy a wholesome lesson of respect for British prowess, or to provide against all possible mishaps by withdrawing our troops from a weak entrenchment into the strong-walled shelter

* Elphinstone, says Durand, was "as brave a gentleman as ever fought under his country's colours." Sir V. Eyre describes him as brave, courteous, well-informed, but enfeebled in mind and body through disease. According to Sir G. Lawrence he was "completely in the hands of his staff," and "quite incapable of exertion."

of the Bála Hissár. Within that fortress our troops could have held out with ease for months until help should come from Bombay or Upper India. But the course recommended by Sturt the Engineer, with the Shah's own sanction, and repeatedly urged by Macnaghten, found no favour with the military chiefs who began already to talk of retiring on Jalálabad. This latter step, if promptly taken, would at least have averted a terrible disaster, and saved our arms from untold disgrace. Macnaghten, on the other hand, could not bear the notion of leaving Shah Shujá to the mercy of his rebellious countrymen. And so it happened that a force strong enough to march anywhere came to be cooped up behind the low breastwork of a cantonment covering a piece of low swampy ground commanded on all sides by hills and forts which the enemy were allowed to occupy at their leisure. The folly of selecting such a post for a garrison in a half-conquered country was crowned by the madness which persisted in holding it now.

Divided counsels embittered by service jealousies took all heart and purpose out of the military arrangements. The lives of our soldiers were frittered away, their energies wasted, their discipline destroyed, in feeble, dilatory, ill-managed efforts to retrieve past failures or to recover lost ground. Shelton's return to cantonments from the Bála Hissár on the 9th of November wrought no improvement in the face of affairs. Thwarted in his demands for an early retreat to Jalálabad, the Brigadier seemed to set himself with a sullen perverseness against all efforts at making the best of a bad position. The orders which Elphinstone tardily issued under pressure from Macnaghten or some one else, Shelton always took his own time to obey. Many a well-planned scheme of attack thus ended in complete or partial failure, and every such miscarriage emboldened the Afgháns to fresh acts of unwonted daring. There was no lack of good officers and brave men on our side; Shelton himself displayed cool courage on one or two occasions; the deeds of Vincent Eyre and his dauntless gunners were worthy of heroes; and single instances of heroic daring against fearful odds happened almost every day. But the best soldiers will become demoralized through constant failures due to their leaders' persistent blundering. "Ubi delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi."

It was under the strongest pressure from above that Shelton on the 13th led out a force of all arms to dislodge the insurgents posted on the western heights of Bemarú. After some sharp

fighting at rather close quarters, the enemy fled, losing both their guns. That sunset gleam of short-lived success ushered in a long night of disaster. From that day forth nothing prospered with the doomed force, cantoned in the Kábul valley. Macnaghten, like Micawber, kept on hoping that somebody or something pleasant would soon turn up; but nothing turned up for any one there save disappointment, suffering, defeat and shame. Instead of returning, as he might easily have done, to Kábul, or even standing fast on the plain of Gandamak, so as to reach out a strong hand to his countrymen in case of need, Sale pursued his march to Jalálabad.* The Envoy's hopes of aid from Kandáhár were also doomed to disappointment. Maclaren's brigade indeed, set out on the long and difficult march to Kábul; but th first snows of winter were already falling in the last days of November about Kalát-i-Ghilzai, and Maclaren not unwillingly retraced his steps. The only arrival within the Kábul cantonments was that of two officers, Pottinger and Haughton, both badly wounded, with one Gorkha Sepoy from Kohistán. They alone, on the 15th of November, remained alive of the whole Gorkha regiment, which had lately garrisoned the district supervised by the Hero of Herát.†

In spite of their defeat on the 13th, not many days passed before the Afgháns once more occupied the heights of Bemarú, plundering the village whence our troops had lately been drawing their sole supplies. A feeble effort to dislodge them on the 22nd was followed up in the dark of next morning by a more promising movement on a larger scale. But the golden moment for seizing the village was lost through Shelton's obstinacy; the troops were exposed in squares to the fire of Afghán matchlock-men; no use was made of the cavalry, who fell fast under a heavy fire; and our single gun soon became unserviceable. The enemy, reinforced by thousands of Ghazi fanatics, renewed the fight with fresh vigour, retook the gun which had once been rescued, and threw our disheartened troops at last into irretrievable disorder. A mingled mass of fugitives and pursuers swept down the hill towards cantonments, and the remnants of the beaten force were only saved from annihilation by the act of one Afghán leader,

* Durand's "First Afghan War." Durand's opinion on these points is clearly the right one. Of the three courses open to him Sale chose the worst, by shutting himself up in Jalálabad.

† The sad story of Pottinger's retreat from Chárikár is fully told in Eyre's "Kabul Insurrection of 1841–42."

Usmán Khán, who suddenly called his followers off from the pursuit.*

Three hundred men, and some of our best officers, fell on that woful day. Thenceforth despondency, if not despair, filled every heart. The folly of their leaders had thoroughly broken down the spirit of our men, already weakened with cold, hunger, and fatigue. To employ such troops in the field again, under such leaders, was become impossible. The question of a retreat into the Bála Hissár was once more mooted, only to be laid aside, this time with the Envoy's own approval. Winter was drawing very near, provisions were running dangerously short, and the only hope of safety visible to Elphinstone lay in the path of negotiation with foes elated by success.

At his request Macnaghten undertook to treat with the insurgent chiefs, at whose head now stood the brave and fiery Mohammad Akbar Khán, burning to avenge the wrongs which he and his father had suffered at our hands. For the past fortnight, indeed, the Envoy's agents in Kábul and the Bála Hissár had been scattering gold and promises among those Afgháns whose patriotism had not quite overpowered their prudence or their greed. One of these agents had even offered a large reward for the heads of the insurgent leaders concerned in the outbreak of November 2; but this appears to have been done without the previous knowledge, at any rate without the sanction, of Macnaghten himself, who always avowed his abhorrence of such "unlawful means" for destroying the rebels, wicked as they were.† To the Afghán mind, however, Macnaghten's innocence seemed anything but clear, and the resentment thus roused against him bore fruit in the melancholy sequel of the tale which has been thus far told.

In such circumstances the course of negotiation was not likely to run smooth. Nothing came of the conference held on the 27th November between the Envoy and the deputies from the hostile chiefs, in pursuance of overtures brought in the day before by Usmán Khán. The conditions offered him, Macnaghten spurned as utterly dishonourable. In answer to his own proposals

* Eyre's "Kabul Insurrection;" Lawrence's "Forty-three Years in India." Usmán Khán was one of the chiefs with whom the Envoy had begun to treat.

† Mohan Lál, the Múnshi, who had found shelter with a friendly Kazilbash chief, had offered the head-money under instructions from Captain John Conolly of the Envoy's staff. But it seems more likely that these instructions issued from the Shah himself, who would have had no scruple in getting rid of his enemies by such means.

the chiefs next morning repeated by letter in yet more defiant terms their demand for a complete surrender, qualified only by a promise to spare all lives. "The God of battles alone can decide the issue," was the purport of Macnaghten's indignant reply. Once more he discussed with Elphinstone the state of affairs, and tried to breathe some of his own cheerful energy into the poor old gentleman's heart. Still hoping that "something would turn up," to avert the need for retiring on Jalálabad, he now urged the General to prepare for a movement into the Bála Hissár, or at least to make some vigorous effort to replenish the fast dwindling stock of supplies. Elphinstone pressed him the more earnestly to make the best terms he could with the Afghán leaders. In the first days of December the cup of our shame was crowned by the destruction of a bridge which spanned the Kábul river a few hundred yards off, and by the easy capture of a small fort overlooking the cantonment-bazaar. On the 10th* of the same month the Envoy's hopes of succour from Kandáhár were quenched by tidings of Maclaren's retreat thither, while his renewed pleadings for a move into the Bála Hissár were received by Shelton with too significant jeers.

At last, on the 11th of December, the Envoy stooped to lay before Mohammad Akbar and his fellow-chiefs the draft of a treaty which recanted every point of the policy trumpeted forth in the Simla Manifesto. He engaged to withdraw all troops and establishments at the earliest possible date from Afghánistán, and to send back thither Dost Mohammad and every other Afghán exile detained in India. The Shah himself was to have the option of remaining in Kábul or accompanying our troops on their homeward march. The Afgháns on their part were to supply our countrymen with food, fodder, and carriage, to respect all property that might be left behind, and to refrain from molesting our friends and those of Shah Shujá. Akbar Khán, impetuous and distrustful of the Envoy's good faith, at first protested against furnishing any supplies to the Kábul force. "Why," he asked, "should you not march to-morrow?" Exhorted to patience by the other chiefs, he listened in seeming calmness to a discussion which lasted two hours. In the end Macnaghten's offers found substantial acceptance; the chiefs agreeing to furnish the needful supplies, while the Envoy undertook to leave the cantonments in

* This is the date given both by the Envoy and by Sir G. Lawrence, who, as Macnaghten's "right-hand man" and military secretary, must have heard the news on its earliest receipt.

three days. Hostages were exchanged, and the conference broke up, says Sir G. Lawrence, who witnessed it, "with mutual assurances of friendship and good faith."

A retreat at that moment might still have saved the lives, if not the honour of Elphinstone's force. But our men and cattle were almost starving and the promised supplies came in but very slowly. Delays resulting from accident or design gave each of the contracting parties a handle for complaint, for ever-deepening mistrust, for fresh demands on one side and vain remonstrances on the other. The few forts still held by us outside cantonments had to be surrendered before the Afgháns would send in any more supplies. What little they sent was often plundered on the way, sometimes in view of our own starving people. On the 20th the Afgháns demanded the surrender of our nine-pounder guns. By that time the snow had begun to fall thickly, and the last hopes of a safe retreat were fast vanishing. Macnaghten was in despair. At one moment he besought the military chiefs to march out at once and fight their way into Kábul. At another he was bidding the Ghilzai and Kazilbásh leaders to rally round Shah Shujá and his English friends. Now turning and doubling like a hunted hare, anon he would have rushed upon his enemies like a stag at bay, or a wounded boar. Despair of retrieving British honour led him into courses which compromised his own. His better nature had become like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it worked in. The Nemesis of our Afghán policy had found him out.

In the game of double-dealing Macnaghten now met with more than his match. On the 22nd of December he received from Mohammad Akbar proposals evidently designed to test his good faith. Clutching at any straw of deliverance, the Envoy fell headlong into the pit dug for him by his bitterest foe. Akbar offered to join the English and the Ghilzais in a league to maintain Shah Shujá on his throne. Akbar himself, as the Shah's prime minister, was to receive forty thousand a year from the Indian Government, and the British troops were to retire from the country next spring. At any other moment in his life the Envoy would have kept clear of a scheme so manifestly laid for his undoing, a scheme, moreover, which involved the treacherous seizure of one of Akbar's foremost colleagues, Aminullah Khán. But now he saw only another chance of saving his country's honour at whatever cost to himself; and the risk of a hundred deaths seemed to him far better than the life he had been leading

for the past six weeks. It was just possible that Mohammad Akbar might be sincere, and there could at least be no harm in playing off one treacherous Afghán against another, if only thus the Envoy could save from utter ruin the great interests committed to his charge, So he put his name to a paper expressing his agreement with the Barakzai leader's terms.*

That paper sealed his doom. It deepened Akbar's old suspicions of our bad faith, and gave him a new pretext for punishing the authors of his country's wrongs. About noon of the next day Macnaghten set forth in company with his staunch friends Lawrence, Trevor, and Mackenzie, to confer with Akbar about his new scheme, on the plain between cantonments and the Siyah Sang hills. His three friends, on learning the object of his errand, had warned him of the plot they saw brewing against his person, if not his life. "A plot!" he answered; "let me alone for that, trust me for that!" To Elphinstone's dissuasions he replied by offering to bear him company if he would only march out his troops at once against the enemy. "I am sure we shall beat them; as regards these negotiations, I have no faith in them." Shaking his head, the General declared that the troops could no longer be trusted.† He promised, however, to hold part of his force in readiness for a projected movement on the Bála Hissár and Mahmúd Khán's Fort. When Lawrence on the way spoke to him of treachery, Macnaghten owned that treachery of course there was, but what else could he do? The General had declared himself unable to fight. There was no chance of aid from any quarter, and the enemy had not fulfilled one article of their treaty. "The life I have led for the last six weeks, you know well; and rather than be disgraced and live it over again, I would risk a hundred deaths. Success will save our honour and more than make up for all risks."

Escorted by a few troopers, Sir William rode on to the place of meeting. The snow was lying thick upon the ground. On the top of a small hillock sat Akbar himself on horseback, surrounded by his Sardars or chief officers, while crowds of armed Afgháns filled up the background. Dismounting as the Englishmen rode up, Akbar's party exchanged greetings with the Envoy's. All sat

* Akbar's messenger had even gone so far as to make an offer of Aminullah's head in return for a certain sum of money. But this the Envoy spurned with abhorrence, saying, "It was neither his custom nor that of his country to give a price for blood"—(Eyre's "Kabul Insurrection").

† Lawrence's "Forty-three Years in India."

down to discuss matters on carpets spread for the purpose along the further slope of the hillock. Akbar and the Envoy sat apart talking together like new-made friends. A number of armed Afgháns drew near the party, but these, said Akbar, were all in the secret, and the Sahibs need not be afraid. Suddenly, at a word from the Barakzai chief, each of the English officers found himself pinioned from behind, deprived of his weapons, and hurried off on horseback behind one of the chiefs towards the city. They had just time to see Macnaghten's face of horror as he struggled in vain to free himself from the firm grasp of Mohammad Akbar and Sultan Jan, before their captors bore them away at speed over the frozen snow, followed and beset by murderous Ghazis, whose swords and bludgeons thirsted for their blood. Two of them, saved by the speed of their horses and the courage or the mere proximity of their protectors, escaped with only a few bad bruises from the death which menaced them at every step. But a stumble of Trevor's horse sent him to the ground, and in a moment more his body was cut to pieces.

Meanwhile, Macnaghten also had met his doom. Akbar had meant only to carry him off as a hostage and a guarantee for the freedom of his country and his father's restoration; but the Envoy's struggles seem to have conquered his scanty powers of self-control, and he shot him down with one of the pistols which Macnaghten had given him a few hours before. The Envoy's body was hacked to pieces by the exulting Ghazis, and his headless trunk was afterwards borne in triumph through the streets of Kábul.

This cruel close to the life of a brave, accomplished gentleman, a ripe scholar, an able and zealous servant of the State, took place within a few hundred yards of a position still held by more than 4,000 British troops. More than one officer had witnessed the attack made on the murdered Envoy, and one at least had seen the Afgháns hacking at his body. Our own soldiers were burning for action, and yet not a hand was raised that day to avenge his murder or to try and rescue his companions. The Native escort had fled back to cantonments at the first alarm, and the military commanders refused to believe that any harm had befallen the Envoy's party. When the sad truth became publicly known on the morrow, they called on Major Eldred Pottinger to take up the dropt threads of Macnaghten's diplomacy, to negotiate once more on the basis of a treaty existing only in name. With a spirit worthy of the late Envoy, his successor besought his military

colleagues to reject all further negotiation with a faithless enemy, and to hold out to the last in the Bála Hissár, or else to force their way at all hazards to Jalálabad. For a moment the General seemed willing to adopt the bolder and more honourable course. But his evil genius, Shelton, soon quenched his rising courage, and the council of war decided to accept the only terms which Akbar and his fellow-chiefs now deigned to offer.

With a heavy heart Pottinger proceeded to carry out his instructions. The amended treaty included the surrender of all our guns except six field pieces, of all spare muskets and ammunition, of all the coin in the public treasury, and the payment of large sums of money which Macnaghten had promised to the leading Afghán chiefs. The demand for hostages from the married men and their families was not then pressed, but, short of that, there was no humiliation which our hapless countrymen had not to endure.

The first day of the year 1842 saw the ratified treaty brought into camp, bearing the seals of eighteen chiefs. The preparations for departure went dismally forward, amid scenes of wild disorder, of outrages which Shelton declined to check.* Snow fell heavily from time to time, and the misery of our half-starved, ill-clad Indian Sepoys, in a climate so strange to them, can easily be imagined. Constant warnings from Shah Shujá and our friends in Kábul deepened the pervading gloom. Once more, on January 5, Pottinger, supported by Lawrence, who had been sent back to cantonments after some days of imminent peril, urged the General to march straight into the Bála Hissár. "No!" said Elphinstone, "we must retreat!" and the order was issued to make ready for a march next morning towards Jalálabad.

About nine A.M. of January 6, the advanced guard of a force still numbering 4,500 fighting men—a force which, under a Nott or a Napier, would long since have turned the tables on its foes—was led out by Brigadier Anquetil through a breach made in the ramparts the night before. It was "a crouching, drooping, dispirited army" which Lawrence saw slowly picking its way through the snow, in which the Sappers and the men of the 44th sank a foot deep at every step, even of the regular track. Shelton led the main column, and the rear-guard was commanded by Colonel Chambers. Behind the advanced guard followed the women and children, escorted by Captain Lawrence and a small

* Lawrence's "Forty-three Years in India;" Eyre's "Kabul Insurrection."

body of horse and foot. Some 12,000 camp-followers shared and sadly impeded the march of our troops. In spite of the manifest need for pushing on, it was evening before the rear-guard left cantonments, and the night was spent by the whole force at Baigrám, only five miles off. Even before the rear-guard started the work of plunder and destruction began. Crowds of Afgháns rushed into the deserted entrenchment, destroying or setting fire to everything which could not be carried away. Many a soldier and camp follower fell by the wayside, stricken with the cold, or pierced by bullets from the far-reaching jazails.

A night of intense suffering was followed by a day of prolonged disaster. As they struggled wearily onwards through the snow, the troops and camp-followers got mixed up and huddled together in ever worse confusion. Almost every step in the short march to Butkhák was taken in blood. The sabre and the matchlock added their hundreds to the victims slain by the cruel frost. Guns were lost or abandoned, heaps of baggage disappeared, and half of the Sepoys threw away the arms which their numbed fingers could no longer grasp. That night the force lay out at Butkhák, cold and hungry, on the snow, which by next morning had become for many their bed of death. Tents of any sort there were none, save for the women, the children, and a few of the leading officers.

In two days our troops had got over nine or ten miles only, and the worst of the march was all to come. Before them rose the stupendous crags of the Kurd-Kábul, cleft by a narrow pass five miles long, through which a half-frozen torrent wound its way. Into this awful Valley of Death the force next morning plunged in ominous disorder, under a rolling fire from the Ghilzais lining the cliffs above. The presence of Akbar himself, who still made some show of keeping faith with Elphinstone, failed to check the fury of his fierce countrymen. In vain did some of his chief officers strive their seeming best to the same end. The ladies who rode with the advance found their only safety in galloping forward under a hail of bullets, one of which wounded Lady Sale in the arm. As the column struggled onwards, the panic and the confusion grew worse; men, horses, and baggage-animals all jumbled together in headlong flight from the death that dogged them on all sides. For a time the men of the 44th Foot and the 54th Sepoys fought gallantly to guard the rear, and the horse-artillerymen stuck manfully to their guns. But erelong the tide of flight swept all on together in one helpless mass. For those

who fell of wounds or exhaustion there was small chance of escape from death, swift or lingering, under Afghán knives, or the cruel cold. One more gun and most of the remaining stores and baggage fell into the enemy's hands. The Ghilzais glutted themselves with plunder, and 3,000 corpses lay where they had fallen. The snow came down as the troops emerged from that dreadful gully into the high plain beyond, where the night was spent in untold suffering, shortened for many by the sleep of death.*

Next morning, most of the troops, wiser than their leaders, began pushing forward towards Tazin. But they were soon recalled by Elphinstone, who still based his hopes of deliverance on the promises or the forbearance of Mohammad Akbar. Three more hostages, Pottinger, Lawrence, and Mackenzie, had already passed into Akbar's hands, and now he offered to take charge of all the ladies, the children, the married men, and the wounded officers. This offer was thankfully accepted by Pottinger, as well as Elphinstone. In spite of Shelton's remonstrances, a halt was ordered for that day. Of the troops paraded under the Brigadier, one regiment only, the 44th Foot, still mustered over 200 bayonets, while the native regiments, horse and foot, averaged only 100 men each, and the horse-artillery were reduced to threescore. Some 800 Englishmen and Sepoys were all that remained of the army which set out three days before from the plain of Kábul. Of the absentees some had deserted, including a whole regiment of the Shah's horse. But far the greater number had perished by the way.† A few thousand camp-followers still survived.

On the morning of the 10th the wrecks of our army resumed their march towards Tazin. Again the camp-followers crowded to the front; again the Ghilzai matchlocks rained death upon the disordered mass from every point of vantage; again the European soldiers in front and rear nobly maintained the honour of their flag. But the defiles through which they pressed forward were soon choked with the dead and dying. The Sepoys, in their despair, threw away their arms and accoutrements, and the Afgháns, like hungry wolves, swooped down upon the mass of

* Some of the horrors which he witnessed that day as one of Akbar's prisoners, are well described by Sir G. Lawrence in the work from which I have before quoted.

† On the morning of the 9th died the gallant young Sturt, of the Bengal Engineers, son-in-law of Lady Sale. Mortally wounded in the Kurd-Kábul Pass, he was rescued by the brave Lieutenant Mein of the 13th Foot, who brought him out of the Pass into camp, where he expired a few hours afterwards. Mein himself was suffering at the time from a wound in his head—("Eyre's "Kabul Insurrection").

fugitives, sword in hand. In the long gorge of the Haft-Kotal the work of slaughter was renewed with unquenched fury, and before evening the last small remnant of the Native Infantry had disappeared. About sixty Europeans fell that day.

Mohammad Akbar, who had seen the carnage, proposed that our troops should lay down their arms in return for the promise of a safe-conduct to Pesháwar. This, indeed, was now their only chance of safety; but Elphinstone's unreasonable care for British honour forbade him to abandon the camp-followers to their fate, as if that honour had not been daily insulted and set at naught for many weeks past. A brief rest at Tazin was followed by a long and painful night march over the hills to Jagdálak. Leaving their last gun behind, the little band of 400 men and officers moved off in the silence of night. For a few hours darkness favoured their advance, but beyond Seh-Bába the merciless Afgháns again found them out, and once more troops and camp-followers became mingled in tumultuous disorder. By eight of the next morning twelve miles only had been accomplished. Seven hours of constant fighting elapsed before the advance reached Jagdálak, ten miles further on. It was soon afterwards joined by Shelton, who, with a handful of his men, had kept the enemy all day in check, although the fire from their jazails thinned his numbers from hour to hour.

Here the two hundred survivors of the Kábul force, hungry, thirsty, worn out with cold and weariness, sought shelter behind some ruined walls from the bullets of their ruthless foes. Some hundreds of the camp-followers still crouched beside them. At a conference held with the English commanders, Mohammad Akbar once more proposed an immediate surrender on the terms already named. Once more the poor old General refused, for his honour's sake, an offer which might still have resulted in the saving of precious lives.* Elphinstone and Shelton were then detained by Akbar as hostages for the evacuation of Jalálabad.

Next day, the 12th, Akbar Khán held further discussion with his new captives in the presence of many Ghilzai chiefs, who had flocked in to pay their respects to the son of their exiled Amir.

* "They had abandoned their post, their stores and treasures, when they had a well-equipped army of 5,000 men to defend them—had allowed some 8,000 camp-followers to be butchered and their fighting men to be reduced to less than 200—it was surely too late *then* to talk of honour, when to surrender was the only measure which could avert the annihilation of this remnant"—(Lawrence's "Forty-three Years in India").

Their hatred of the English broke out in fierce cries for the infidels' blood, and for several hours all Akbar's appeals to their better feelings, or even to their avarice, were urged in vain. At last in the evening he persuaded them by a promise of two lakhs of rupees —£20,000—to agree to escort the English remnant safe to Jalálabad. But that door of escape for our doomed countrymen was even then closed. Rendered desperate by long suspense, by accumulated hardships, by a galling matchlock fire, which their boldest sallies still failed to subdue, they marched off after dark down the Jagdálak valley. At the spot where the valley narrows into a long chasm between two towering walls of rock, they found their progress stopped by a double barricade of tree-trunks and branches of the prickly holly-oak.

In the midst of their efforts to surmount this barrier, a sudden fire of bullets rained upon them from every side, while bodies of Afgháns rushed in with swords and knives among the helpless throng of troops and followers. Heaps of bodies were soon lying stript and mangled at the foot of the barricade. Only a few score officers and soldiers fought their way through all hindrances into the open country beyond the pass. But the force, as a force, no longer existed. What remained of it struggled on in detached parties to Gandamak, where nearly all died fighting to the last against hopeless odds. One or two were taken prisoners. Of twelve officers who had ridden on ahead of their comrades, six only reached Fathiabad. Some of the villagers here gave them food, but while they were eating it two of their number were attacked and cut down. Three more were pursued, overtaken, and slain a few miles from Jalálabad. One only, Dr. Brydon, sorely wounded and half dead from hunger and fatigue, was borne on by his jaded pony to the walls of the fort which Sale, in defiance of Macnaghten's orders, had resolved to hold throughout the winter. Of all the thousands who had marched away from Kábul on the morning of the 6th of January, Dr. Brydon alone lived to tell his countrymen in Jalálabad, on the evening of the 13th, of the doom which had overtaken his fellow-sufferers.

Such, in the words of Sir Henry Durand, "was the consummation of a line of policy, which from first to last held truth in derision, trod right under foot, and, acting on a remote scent, was enabled for a time unscrupulously to mislead public opinion." It would, of course, be absurd to say that such consequences necessarily flowed from such a policy. The collapse of that policy, bad and blundering as it was, sprang directly from the choice of agents ill-fitted for their work. Macnaghten's cheery trustfulness, Elphin-

stone's bodily and mental decay, Shelton's stupid obstinacy, chronic dissensions between the civil and military chiefs, Sale's withholding of timely succour, all wrought together to shape out a catastrophe, the thought of which should make the faces of our children's children blush with a patriot's shame. A Nott or a Keane would have turned to worthier account the zeal of his officers, and the disciplined courage of his men. A better managed retreat would have saved our honour and many thousand lives. Nevertheless, the crowning disasters lend a show of dramatic completeness to the blunders and the wrong-doing of former years. The annihilation of the Kábul Force sprang by a train of natural sequences from the wanton invasion of Afghánistán. It seemed as if a curse had settled upon our Afghán policy from the day when British troops escorted Shah Shujá towards the Bála Hissár; a curse which blinded Macnaghten's eyes to the Shah's unpopularity, which led Sir Willoughby Cotton to choose the worst possible site for his cantonments, which placed a sickly old General in a post for which he knew himself unfitted,* and which stultified the efforts of our bravest officers to atone for the errors and shortcomings of their appointed chiefs.

Of the army which had been thus annihilated some hundred and twenty men, women, and children survived as prisoners in the hands of Mohammad Akbar. One camp-follower, a Mr. Baness, was shortly afterwards brought into Jalálabad by a fakir, to whom he had once shown some kindness; but the poor man, utterly exhausted from cold and hunger, died the next day. Very few of his luckless companions seem to have survived the horrors of that fatal retreat. Of the Sepoys, however, a few score afterwards straggled into Pesháwar. The news of that great disaster, the heaviest, the most complete that had ever befallen our arms in Asia, sent a thrill of momentary dismay through every English heart in India, and became the talk of every Indian bazaar. No outward stir, however, betrayed the drift of popular feeling, nor were any of the native princes tempted to renew their old intrigues against our rule. For our countrymen also there was comfort ere long in knowing that England's honour was still upheld by Nott and Rawlinson at Kandáhár, by Sale, Dennie, and Broadfoot at Jalálabad, by Clerk, Mackeson, and Henry Lawrence in the Panjáb.

* General Elphinstone was selected by Lord Auckland against the advice of his Commander-in-Chief, Sir Jasper Nicholls, as commander of the forces in Afghánistán. He was about to return to India on sick leave when the outbreak of the 2nd November took place.

CHAPTER V.

THE LAST ACT OF THE AFGHÁN DRAMA.

It was a bitter moment for Lord Auckland when he learned that Elphinstone's force had ceased to exist. Within a few weeks of his departure homewards the whole fabric of his Afghán policy had been shattered to pieces by a blow which laid his own reputation for ever in the dust.. At once, indeed, on the 30th of January, he issued from Calcutta a General Order, which spoke of the late disaster as "a partial reverse," and "a new occasion for displaying the stability and vigour of the British power, and the admirable spirit and valour of the British-Indian army." But this flash of warlike energy soon died away, and the mind of the Governor-General relapsed into all its former gloom. All through November and December no serious effort had been made by the Indian Government to push troops forward betimes to the scene of danger; and now that the worst had happened, Lord Auckland still set his face against any attempt to retrieve our tarnished honour by a march to Kábul. If any more troops were sent beyond the Khaibar, they should do nothing more than help Sir Robert Sale to withdraw his garrison from Jalálabad to Pesháwar. As for "any ulterior operations," with a view to another advance beyond the Indus, it would be time to think of them by-and-by.

Such was the tenour of his letters to Sir J. Nicolls and Mr. George Clerk, his political agent at Ambála. The latter, ably seconded by Mr. Robertson, the Lieutenant-Governor of Agra, had laboured zealously with all his might to hasten the despatch of Colonel Wild's brigade from Firózpur to Pesháwar. Had his efforts been more warmly supported elsewhere, it is possible that one brigade, if not two, might have strengthened Sale's hands before winter had fairly set in. But the Commander-in-Chief himself shrank from further weakening the diminished garrisons of Upper India in aid of a policy which he had always condemned. Wild's brigade had been allowed to start before the end of November, but it took a whole month to traverse the 300 miles

between the Satlaj and Peshâwar. With it went a body of artillerymen, but no guns. For these Wild was bidden to depend on such help as Avitabile's Sikhs at Peshâwar might care to render. Four rickety field-pieces were made over to our gunners on the 3rd of January; but fresh delays damped the ardour of Wild's young Sepoys. On the 15th of January two regiments at last made their way to the fort of Ali Masjid, only to find themselves short of supplies. Four days later Wild moved forward the rest of his brigade to their relief; but the hillmen of the Khaibar met the Sepoys with a brisk fire. The borrowed guns broke down one after another, and the Sepoys, already disheartened by the desertion of our Sikh allies,* erelong broke and fled, leaving behind them many dead and the guns, which no prayers or efforts of Clerk's worthy subaltern, Captain Henry Lawrence, could prevail upon them to bring off. Wild himself was disabled by a bad wound. A few days later the regiments which had been left in Ali Masjid fought their way back through the pass to Jamrúd, with no great loss either of men or baggage.

Meanwhile Nott, with his two strong brigades, held firm possession of Kandáhár. The news of the Kábul outbreak in November had reached him just in time to arrest the march of one brigade towards India. The return of Maclaren's force to Kandáhár from its unsuccessful attempt to reach Kábul gave him all the strength he needed for the maintenance of his own position against a country in arms. Whatever dangers menaced he was ready to meet them with a bold countenance. His old enemy Aktar Khán was again in the field, and round him rallied most of the neighbouring chiefs and a prince of Shah Shujá's own family, Safdar Jang. On the 12th of January a strong force of insurgents encamped on the Argandáb, about five miles only westward of Kandáhár. Nott marched out at once to attack them, and in half an hour after the first shot was fired he drove them before him in disorderly flight. With enemies all around him, and treachery at work within Kandáhár itself, he busied himself in strengthening his defences and laying in a large store of supplies. When the insurgent chiefs in February called upon him to evacuate Kandáhár, in compliance with orders signed by Pottinger and Elphinstone, the stern old soldier scornfully refused to obey any orders save those which came to him from his own Government. The troops were in excellent health and spirits, ready to

* The Sikh troops in camp at Jamrúd mutinied the night before and set off for Peshâwar.

do and dare anything under a commander who knew how to command. Good officers he had around him not a few, but the best among them was Nott himself.

After clearing a thousand Afghán families out of the city, Nott, on the 7th of March, again led the great bulk of his troops against the enemy outside. Again the insurgents retired before his steady advance. For three days Nott followed them up, seldom getting within gunshot of his prey. By the 10th he began to feel that he had been outwitted. There was no longer an enemy in his front. That same evening a sudden attack was made on three of the city gates, one of which speedily took fire from the burning brushwood heaped up against it. A swarm of yelling Ghazis, many of them drunk with bang, surged against the blazing timber and beneath the city walls. But the steady courage of the few troops within, backed by the resourceful skill of their leader, Major Lane, and the ready counsel of the subtle-witted Rawlinson, forbade all ingress to the assailants, who tried again and again to clamber over the grain-bags piled behind the gate. At midnight the desperate struggle, which had lasted four hours, ended in the retreat of the Afgháns, of whom several hundred lay dead. On the 12th Nott returned to Kandáhár. Some further movements, undertaken later in the month by Nott and Wymer, taught the enemy a new lesson of respect for British prowess against heavy odds.

The spirited defence of Kalát-i-Ghilzai by Halkett Craigie of the Shah's service stands out in bright relief against the disasters which befell Colonel Palmer's garrison at Ghazni. Driven from the town and shut up in the citadel early in the winter, Palmer's Sepoys suffered cruelly from the bitter cold, aggravated by want of fuel and by half rations of scarcely eatable food. On the 6th of March the wasted garrison marched out of the citadel under the promise of a safe-conduct to Pesháwar. But the compact was one which the victors could not, or would not, keep. A crowd of Ghazis made a furious attack on the houses in which Palmer and his troops had been allowed to take shelter. For days their crowded inmates had to endure the horrors of a second and far more fatal siege. At last, when the Sepoys deserted in a body, bent on trying to make their way across country to Peshawar, their officers agreed to lay down their arms and march as prisoners of war to Kábul.

All through the winter Sale's brigade had held their ground with ease inside Jalálabad. On the 13th of November they found that place little better than a heap of ruins. Around them masses of

armed Afgháns were already gathering. But a well-timed sally of 1,100 men, under the gallant Colonel Monteith, soon drove them off to a more respectful distance, while Captain Broadfoot of the Engineers began at once to put the defences in the best possible repair. On the 1st of December another sally, led this time by Colonel Dennie, once more dispersed the gathering foe. By that time the twofold labour of repairing the ramparts and collecting supplies had been well-nigh accomplished; and the troops, in a climate far milder than that of Kábul, awaited hopefully the next turn in the march of events.

To the orders presently received from Kábul for the evacuation of Jalálabad Sale and his staff would give no heed. But before the end of January a change for the worse came over the spirit of their counsels. Despairing of help from the side of Pesháwar, Sale and Macgregor, the political officer, proposed to treat with Shah Shujá for the surrender of Jalálabad. In spite of Broadfoot's passionate protests against a course so disgraceful, a council of war accepted the main points of the new scheme. Happily for all concerned, the Shah's reply left our officers a backdoor of escape from a bargain of which they had already grown ashamed. Broadfoot's fiery eloquence carried the day at last against timid counsels, born mainly of wrathful despair at Lord Auckland's seeming readiness to leave his countrymen in the lurch. From that time forth no one in Sale's garrison talked of capitulating on any terms.* The great earthquake of the 19th of February shook the new line of defences to the ground and made sad breaches in the ramparts; but Broadfoot's Sappers, aided by relays from the other troops, repaired all damages within three weeks. Foraging parties still went out daily to return with full loads. On the 10th of March Akbar's Afgháns once more fled before the onset of a British column led by the fearless Dennie.

Nine days after the earthquake the new Governor-General landed in Calcutta, and took over the reins of government from the Earl of Auckland, for such on account of his earlier successes he had become. Two weeks later Lord Auckland returned home, broken down in health and spirits by the utter failure of a policy opposed to his natural instincts, and condemned in its later stages by his own good sense. An exhausted treasury and an increasing debt were his chief legacies to the country he had gone out to govern with far happier prospects six years before. For most of

* Durand's "First Afghan War;" Marshman's "Sir Henry Havelock."

that period the engrossing cares of a mad foreign policy had left him small leisure for internal reforms. He had written, indeed, a kindly minute on education, had done something to encourage the spread of science, and had issued a decree of doubtful wisdom for replacing judicial oaths by solemn affirmations. In 1840 he severed the old connection between the Government and the national faiths, by handing over to the care of Hindu priests the revenues derived from Hindu temples and religious rites, and by forbidding the Company's troops to parade, and the civil officers to attend public gatherings in honour of native festivals. The old tax on pilgrims, which had long been a fruitful source of public revenue, easy to collect, and giving offence to nobody save a few zealous Christians, was also abolished. A man of kind heart, amiable manners, good intentions, and solid understanding, he left behind him no personal enemies and many friends. It is, however, by his Afghán policy that Lord Auckland's statesmanship must be judged, and the fruits of that policy were equally hurtful to his own fame, his country's honour, and the finances of our Indian empire. The sad catastrophe in the Afghán snows could never have occurred but for the needless invasion of Afghánistán; and many millions were added to the debt of India before the disgrace of Elphinstone's retreat from Kábul had been slurred over by the victories of Nott and Pollock.

Lord Auckland's successor, Lord Ellenborough, had already given some promise of high achievements in the future. The son of an eminent Chief Justice, he had served his novitiate as a statesman under Wellington at the Board of Control in 1828-1830, and he held the same office under Peel for a few months in 1841. In common with his political friends he had denounced the Afghán war as a blunder and a crime, and he went out to India full of the praiseworthy ideas which had found large utterance from his own lips at the farewell dinner given him by the Court of Directors in November, 1841. For the time, however, he had now to deal with far other questions than those which may have loomed before his mind's eye during his four months' voyage out. Touching at Madras, he had found among the Sepoys of that Presidency symptoms of deep and general discontent, due to the ill-timed changes lately effected in their batta and pension rules. In one case the discontent had just ripened into open mutiny, and the two native regiments which were about to embark from Madras for the China war then pending, were mutinous already at heart, if not in overt deeds. Lord Ellenborough's presence saved the

Madras Government from yielding everything to their troops, while the mutinous spirit was allayed by promises of further inquiry.*

Still less encouraging was the news which awaited the Governor-General at Calcutta. Reaching Pesháwar early in February, a few days ahead of the troops which Clerk had been hurrying forward from Firózpur, General Pollock found Wild's four regiments utterly unfit for any service. Half the Sepoys were in hospital, and the rest were deeply tainted with the mutinous spirit of Avitabile's Sikhs. They had no mind to renew acquaintance with the dreaded Khaibar, and some even of their English officers shared the same feeling.† The Sikh troops about Pesháwar were insolent and unmanageable by their own commanders. Sher Singh, who had just succeeded Karak Singh as ruler of Lahór, had little power to enforce compliance with Clerk's demands for the promised succours and supplies. The Afridi tribes of the Khaibar, deaf to Mackeson's offers and promises, prepared to defend the Pass with all their might. To all Sale's and Macgregor's prayers for timely aid Pollock could answer only by assuring them of his earnest wish and resolve to succour them at the earliest possible moment, and by asking Sale how much longer he could reckon upon holding out. From the side of Kandáhár no news had been received since the middle of January.

While Pollock was waiting for the reinforcements, without which he would not stir, and Clerk, at Lahór, was urging the Sikh ruler to heartier efforts in furtherance of the common cause, Lord Ellenborough, on the 15th of March, laid before Sir Jasper Nicolls by letter a full and clear outline of the policy which he was then prepared to pursue. Setting wholly aside, as "a source of weakness, rather than of strength," a policy which had been condemned by all its recent fruits, he held it his first duty to care for the safety of our garrisons in Afghánistán, and to aim at the re-establishment of our military reputation by the infliction o some signal and decisive blow upon the Afgháns," in requital fo past atrocities and breaches of faith. That done, we might think of withdrawing from Afghánistán, "satisfied that the king we have set up has not the support of the nation over which he ha been placed." Next in importance to the relief of all beleaguered garrisons, he placed the release of the prisoners taken at Kábu as "an object deeply interesting in point of feeling and honour." In furtherance of that object it might become a questi

* Durand. † Kaye.

whether Pollock's and Sale's forces should "take a forward position near Jalálabad, or even advance to Kábul." He suggested also that Sir J. Nicolls should concentrate a large force upon the Satlaj, in order to influence the Sikhs by a display of our imposing strength, and to give confidence to our own subjects and soldiers.*

At last Pollock's patient firmness, worthily seconded by the tireless zeal of Clerk and Henry Lawrence, overrode all hindrances to a forward move. Within two months the quiet, cool-headed Colonel of Bengal Artillery, who had served with credit in two sieges and three great wars, had recruited the health and restored the discipline of Wild's brigade, besides winning the perfect confidence of all who served under him. Cheered by the presence of their white-faced comrades, by frequent tokens of their new commander's care and foresight, Pollock's Sepoys were now in a fair state of readiness for their appointed task. Golab Singh, the wily Sikh Rajah of Jammu, had agreed at the eleventh hour to act in due concert with his English allies. A timely reinforcement of English dragoons and horse-artillery at length set Pollock free to attempt the forcing of the Khaibar, with every prospect of a successful issue.

On the 5th April, in the dark of early morning, the troops began moving towards the Pass, at the mouth of which was a huge barricade of big stones and tree branches set in clay. Two strong columns were sent forward to crown the heights held by swarms of resolute Afridis. Led on by the lusty soldiers of the 9th Foot, the Sepoys clambered up the steep hillsides with a vigour which soon drove the enemy from one post of vantage after another. When the flanking columns had done their duty and turned both flanks of the main position, it became an easy task for the centre column to force its way, without fighting, over the barricade. The fort of Ali Masjid was found abandoned. Leaving this in charge of the Sikh troops, who came up next day by another road, Pollock on the 7th pursued his way unhindered, but still in fighting order, through the remaining twenty-five miles of the Pass. His whole loss in the preliminary fighting had amounted only to 135 killed and wounded. "The Sepoys," he wrote, "behaved nobly," and Ferris's Jazailchis "excited the delight and admiration of all who beheld them." †

* Durand. In the same letter Lord Ellenborough puts aside as clearly impracticable Major Rawlinson's scheme for annexing Kandáhár to the dominions of Shah Kamrán, the "nominal ruler of Herát."

† "Papers relating to Afghanistan."

By that time, however, Sale's garrison had virtually relieved themselves. Impatient of further idleness, on short rations, doubtful as to the issue of Pollock's movements, and urged by others to forestall Akbar's rumoured purpose of a retreat, Sale resolved to strike one hard decisive blow for his own deliverance. One of his best officers, Captain Havelock, who had stood by Broadfoot when none else heeded him, drew out a plan of attack which his brave but slow-moving chief consented to carry through. At daylight on the 7th April three columns, led respectively by Dennie, Monteith, and Havelock, with a reserve of guns and cavalry—some 1,800 men in all—sallied forth against the enemy, reckoned at 6,000. In less than two hours the fight was over; Akbar's troops were in full retreat on Laghmán; his four guns were in our hands, and most of his stores and camp-equipage had been destroyed. The completeness of a victory, which might have been won as easily some weeks earlier, was only marred by the death of one officer, the ever forward Dennie, who fell mortally wounded in attacking a small fort, which might with advantage have been let alone. With a total loss of eleven slain and seventy wounded, Sale had put an end to the late blockade and driven Akbar's best troops, with heavy slaughter, from Jalálabad.*

On the 16th of April Pollock, who had meanwhile been marching leisurely forward, encamped outside the stronghold for defending which against an enemy in no way formidable, Sale's garrison received from Lord Ellenborough the title of "Illustrious." Thenceforth Sale's troops fell into their places under Pollock's supreme command; while the political functions hitherto discharged by Rawlinson and Macgregor were now entrusted to the two military leaders, Pollock and Nott. It was felt by the Governor-General that the time for a divided authority, so fruitful of harm in the past, had gone by when two such commanders were in the field; and events certainly went far to justify the wisdom of his conclusions.

More open to question was Lord Ellenborough's seeming change of purpose with regard to further movements on the field of war, after he had heard of the fall of Ghazni and the repulse of England's small force at Haikulzai in the Pishin Valley, on its way to strengthen Nott with treasure and supplies. The orders which he now despatched to Sir J. Nicolls and the commanders in the field all pointed to an early withdrawal of every

* Parliamentary Papers; Kaye; Marshman's "Havelock."

British soldier from Afghánistán. So earnest was the gaze he fastened on the military problems of the moment, that he appeared to overlook all those moral and political considerations on which his letter of the 15th of March had laid a becoming stress. As soon as Nott had relieved the garrison of Kalát-i-Ghilzai, he was to take measures for falling back on Kwatta from Kandáhár. Pollock also was bidden to withdraw his troops as soon as possible to Pesháwar, unless he had already begun his march on Kábul, or unless the issue of his negotiations for the release of Akbar's prisoners might be endangered by too hasty a retreat. Whatever he had done or might do in either of these directions, Pollock was clearly given to understand that, in Lord Ellenborough's opinion, his only safe course was to withdraw his army, "at the earliest practicable period, into positions within the Khaibar Pass, where it may possess easy and certain communications with India." For some weeks it seemed as if neither the honour of our arms nor the rescue of English captives were worth a small addition to the risks and sacrifices already incurred.

Happily for both objects Pollock was in no hurry to obey without demur instructions so distasteful to every soldier in his camp. Making the most of the discretionary powers which he chose to read out of those instructions, he pleaded want of carriage, the interests of the prisoners, and a due regard for "the character of the British nation," as urgent reasons for staying where he was, or even for moving a few marches further on. For an advance on Kábul Nott's co-operation would be needed, and "without some demonstration of our power" that officer would not find it easy to retire from Kandáhár.

At Kandáhár the order to retreat came, said Rawlinson, like a thunder-clap on all the garrison. Nott, who felt that he had no discretion, prepared like a good soldier to obey, as soon as he had relieved the gallant Craigie and got together carriage enough for the wants of his force. Wymer's splendid brigade of Sepoys, which had just been clearing a way across the Khojak for the advance of England's brigade to Kandáhár, was sent out on the 19th of May with some other troops to bring off Craigie's garrison and destroy the works of Khalát-i-Ghilzai. Difficulties of carriage and the obvious danger of marching troops to India in the hot and rainy seasons at length induced the Governor-General to defer fulfilment of his orders for the next five or six months.

* Kaye: Parliamentary Papers.

This reprieve allowed time for the play of bolder counsels on the Governor-General's mind. The troops might go on after all to Kábul, and yet be free to march homewards in November. To this complexion Lord Ellenborough's thoughts were coming before the summer rains had fairly set in. Pollock's efforts to obtain from Akbar the peaceful surrender of all his English prisoners had fallen through in May, at the moment of their seeming success; and the prisoners had been removed from Badiábád to Kábul; poor old Elphinstone dying by the way, on the 24th of April, worn out with grief and bodily suffering.* The murder of Shah Shujá at Kábul on the 5th of the same month by the son of our staunch friend, the "good Nawáb," Zamán Khán, brought on a series of intrigues and faction fights, which issued three months later in the placing of Prince Fathi Jang on his father's throne, with Mohammad Akbar for his Vazir. There were other prisoners too at Kábul whom the good Nawáb now saw consigned for a bribe to Akbar's keeping by the High Priest to whose sacred care he himself had lately entrusted them. The fate of all these hostages and prisoners had become more than ever uncertain in view of Afghán treachery and Akbar's own impulses towards revenge. In spite of the official secrecy which wrapped the designs of the Indian Government, there had burst forth from every Anglo-Indian station a loud and bitter outcry against the policy which Lord Ellenborough and his Commander-in-Chief were known, or universally believed, to favour. Even from Downing Street and the India House came injunctions to vindicate the national honour and to rescue every prisoner from Afghán hands.

Thus encouraged or pushed on from all sides, the Governor-General at length gave a half-hearted assent to the only course which policy and patriotism alike dictated. His letters of July 4th to Nott and Pollock betrayed the skill of a master in the art of verbal conjuring. His own opinions, he declared, had undergone no change. The order for withdrawal still held good; but Nott might choose between retiring through Kwatta to Sakhar and retiring to Pesháwar by way of Ghazni, Kábul, and Jalálabad.† Pollock for his part was left free to join hands with Nott at Kábul before returning to Pesháwar.†

* "His kind, mild disposition," says Sir G. Lawrence, "and courteous demeanour, had made him esteemed by us all." Mohammad Akbar, a generous if savage foe, sent his body for burial to Jalálabad.

† Kaye: Parliamentary Papers.

Neither general was deterred from acting on these instructions by the manner in which Lord Ellenborough seemed to shift upon their shoulders the responsibility which he ought to have taken upon his own. After the signal defeat which 1,300 of Nott's troops had, on the 29th of May, inflicted on 8,000 Ghazies, led by Akbar Khán himself, no armed enemy had shown himself anywhere near Kandáhár. A few days earlier Craigie's garrison had repulsed their assailants with heavy slaughter. When Wymer's troops returned from their mission to Kalát-i-Ghilzai, Nott saw himself at the head of a force more than strong enough to march from one end of the country to the other, if only he could muster the needful carriage and supplies. His "beautiful regiments" were in high health and spirits, and he held a thousand of his Bengal Sepoys equal to more than 5,000 Afgháns.* Despatching a strong brigade under England with all his heavy guns to Kwatta, Nott on the 7th of August moved out from Kandáhár at the head of 8,000 good troops of all arms, confident alike in their leader and themselves.

Meanwhile Pollock's force had not been wholly idle. For several weeks of June and July a strong column under Monteith was out in the Shinwari valley inflicting stern, if not savage, punishment on the tribes which had shared among them the property plundered from Elphinstone's force, and were known to hold one of the captured guns. Not only were their forts and houses utterly destroyed, but the very trees which gave them shade were deliberately hacked about and doomed to perish. At last, on the 20th of August, Pollock began his forward march; his troops, 8,000 strong, all burning to avenge the shame and the disasters of the previous winter. At Gandámak he halted for a fortnight, waiting for further news from Nott. On the 7th of September he resumed his march. Next day, on nearing the Jagdálak Pass, he saw the hills on either side crowned with swarms of Ghilzai horse and foot. Our guns were well served, but the enemy stood their ground until Pollock's infantry dashed up the hills, and with wild hurrahs and levelled bayonets drove the Ghilzai warriors off the field. The brunt of the fighting was borne by Sale's brigade, who did their work with a thoroughness that called forth Pollock's hearty praise. But for the rough ground, which checked the ardour of Lockwood's dragoons, few of the enemy would have escaped. Our own loss was wonderfully small.

* Parliamentary Papers.

On the 11th Pollock halted for a day or two's rest at Tazin. Meanwhile Mohammad Akbar, who had already deposed his nominal master, Fathi Jang, had been holding earnest debate with his fellow-chiefs and with one of his hostages, Captain Colin Troup. Dissuaded by the latter from sending him on a bootless errand to the British camp, he resolved at last to stake all on the issue of a battle, and led his troops for that purpose through the Kurd-Kábul. On the 13th the two armies clashed together in one last decisive struggle. The odds against us were formidable enough, for Akbar's troops were strongly posted on all the surrounding heights, and the British musket of that day was no match for the long Afghán jazail. But nothing could stay the resolute onset of our disciplined soldiers, whose warlike zeal, backed up by thorough trust in their cool-headed leader, had been inflamed by the sight of the skeletons that lined the way from Gandámak onwards. Englishmen and Sepoys, horse, foot, and gunners, all fought their best that day. The matchlock-fire was soon silenced by the cold steel, and Unett's troopers, well followed by the Native cavalry, charged with murderous effect into the masses of Afghán horse. The enemy held out bravely after their fashion, retiring sullenly from crag to crag, and losing heavily before they broke up and fled to their own homes. That evening Akbar Khán was far on his way to the highlands north of Kábul.

Two days later Pollock's force were encamped on the Kábul race-course, and next day the British flag once more floated out from the Bála Hissár amidst the roar of many British guns. On the 17th of September Nott himself exchanged greetings with his brother General. His long march from Kandáhár had been accomplished as successfully as Pollock's shorter march from Jalálabad. On his way to Ghazni his troops had encountered no serious opposition, except at Ghoain, where ten thousand Afgháns, on the 30th of August, seemed resolute to bar all advance. One charge of Nott's fine infantry sent them flying, and much booty fell into the victors' hands. On the 5th of September Nott encamped before Ghazni; but the fear of his name had fallen upon the garrison, who abandoned that stronghold during the night. Next day Nott's engineers burst every gun on the walls, set fire to all the woodwork, blew up the bastions, and converted both town and citadel into a heap of ruins. From the tomb of the terrible Mahmúd of Ghazni Nott carried off the sandalwood gates of Somnáth, which had stood there for eight centuries, in memory of Mahmúd's successful raid into Gujarát. This duty had been

laid upon him by Lord Ellenborough, whose theatrical fancy revelled in the prospect of restoring to India a trophy plundered from a Hindu temple.

From Ghazni to Kábul Nott's force held their way without a check, driving the enemy before them whenever a chance offered itself, and firing all the forts that crowned the adjacent hills. Their war-worn leader was not sorry to give his troops and cattle a few days' rest in the bracing Kábul valley, at a height of 6,000 feet above the sea. Pollock, who had already despatched Sir Richmond Shakespear with 600 Kazilbásh troopers in quest of the English prisoners whom Akbar had lately sent off to Bámián, now proposed that Nott should detach one of his own brigades in support of Shakespear and his little band. But the crusty old general pleaded various reasons against dividing his force, and the service designed for one of his brigadiers was eagerly undertaken by Sir Robert Sale, whose lion-hearted wife was among the captives to be rescued.

Sale's brigade had got no further than Argandi when they found their task already done. The erewhile prisoners were riding quietly along towards Sale and Henry Lawrence, escorted by Shakespear's troopers and a body of Afghán horse, headed by their commander, Saleh Mohammad, who in 1840 had deserted the English colours to serve with Dost Mohammad in Bámián. This officer had been ordered by Akbar Khán to carry his captives off to Kulum, where they would probably have dwelt as slaves among the Usbeks of Turkistán. But Saleh Mohammad was open to a bribe at a moment when Akbar's fortunes seemed to have touched the ground. The prisoners signed an agreement which assured him a present of 20,000 rupees, and a pension of £1,200 a year. His troops were also to receive a handsome gratuity. The bait took, Saleh Mohammad on the 12th of September hoisted the English colours over the fort where our countrymen were lodged, and Pottinger summoned the neighbouring chiefs to pay homage to their new masters. The glad news of Akbar's flight from Tazin, received on the 15th, emboldened the little party to set out next day on their march over the Safed Koh to Kábul. On the 17th Shakespear's horsemen rode into view, and all fear of further danger well-nigh passed away. The combined force pushed on until, on the 20th, Sale once more clasped in his arms the wife and daughter from whom he had been parted for the last ten months, eight of which they had spent in a captivity often perilous, if seldom very hard. Next evening the whole party were safely lodged in the

camp of General Pollock, and great was the joy which the news of their reappearance diffused among our countrymen all over India.*

The task of our avenging armies still remained incomplete while Aminullah Khán kept the field in the Kohistán with the remnants of Akbar's routed troops. A British column under McCaskill was sent thither to break up a force which might else prove troublesome to our troops on their homeward march. McCaskill, aided by Havelock, discharged his errand with full success. The strong hill-fort of Istalif was carried with a rush, Broadfoot's sappers leading the way under a hail of Afghán bullets. The captured town was plundered and set on fire. Chárikár, which had witnessed the slaughter of Haughton's brave Gorkhas, was utterly destroyed, and on the 7th of October McCaskill's division returned to Kábul.

One deed of vengeance remained yet to do—of vengeance neither politic nor worthy of a civilized Christian power. The Chár Chattar,† or Great Bazaar of Kábul, built by Ali Mardán Khán, who governed Kábul under Shah Jahán,‡ was marked out for destruction as the place where Macnaghten's mangled body had been exposed to the worst insults of a howling mob. It took Pollock's engineers two days to blow up a building said to be the noblest of its kind in Asia. Then followed a sad scene of fierce rioting and merciless havoc. In spite of all precautions the soldiers from both camps, impelled by a report that Kábul itself was to be given over to plunder, rushed into the city at every unguarded point, set fire to the houses, and pillaged the shops alike of friend and foe. Thousands of harmless tradespeople, including many hundred Hindus, who had but lately re-opened their shops, saw themselves reduced to utter ruin, and powerless to save their women from shameless outrage. Even the quarter inhabited by the friendly Kazilbáshes narrowly escaped the assaults of a soldiery maddened beyond control by memories and outward tokens of wrongs that seemed to justify the worst reprisals.

At last, on the 12th of October, the combined forces, now commanded by Pollock, marched out of camp on their homeward journey, taking with them the blind old king, Zamán Sháh, whose name had been one of terror to the India of Wellesley's days, and

* One of the prisoners, John Conolly, had died of fever some time before.

† Literally "Four bazaars."

‡ He also made the canal which bears his name at Delhi.

his nephew, Fathi Jang, who declined to play the part of a sham king in the Bála Hissár without the support of British bayonets. A crowd of half-starved Hindus from Kábul and Ghazni, with some scores of crippled Sepoys and camp-followers, relics of the old Kábul garrison, and a long train of warlike trophies, encumbered the retreat of the Avenging Army. Pollock's own troops led the advance, those of Nott bringing up the rear. Jalálabad was dismantled by the way, before Pollock could receive Lord Ellenborough's order to hand it over intact to the Sikhs. Pollock's foresight in crowning the hills along his line of march met with its just reward; but Nott and McCaskill also, who led the centre column, were less cautious, and their troops had several sharp skirmishes with the hillmen, from the day they neared the Haft Kotal to that when they emerged from the Khaibar Pass. Both Nott and Pollock were soon forced to abandon and blow up some of the heavier guns. On its march from Dhaka to Ali Masjid one of McCaskill's brigades lost two mountain-guns, which were happily recovered the next day. Nott also had some sharp fighting near the same spot, losing much baggage and not a few men; but his engineers completely destroyed the defences of Ali Masjid. By the 7th of November the whole army was encamped on the green plains of Pesháwar. Another army, assembled at Firózpur under Sir J. Nicolls, warned the Sikhs, whose goodwill had long been doubtful, against doing aught to hinder the return of our victorious army across the Panjáb.*

Meanwhile the troops which England led from Kandáhár to Kwatta had since pursued their way without hindrance through the Bolan Pass into Sind. By this time also it was known in India that Stoddart and Conolly, the Bokhára captives, had been released from further suffering by a violent death. Many efforts had been made from many quarters—from Petersburg and Constantinople, as well as Calcutta, Kábul, and Herát—to obtain their freedom; but all in vain. The Amir would listen to no remonstrances, even backed by threats, and the news of our Afghán disasters did not tend to soften his heart or increase his fears of British vengeance. Early in 1842 he went forth on a campaign against Kokán. Soon after his return to Bokhára the fate of the prisoners was sealed. On the 1st of October Lord Ellenborough wrote to the Amir on behalf of the two "innocent travellers," as he chose to call them; but it was too late for all such interference. Stoddart and Conolly had been led out of

* Kaye.

prison and publicly beheaded on the 17th of June, and in the middle of September one of Stoddart's servants had told the sad story to Major Rawlinson, as an eye-witness of his master's end.

While Pollock was yet at Kábul, the Governor-General had amused himself at Simla with drawing up proclamations and devising schemes for a splendid pageant to be enacted presently at Firózpur. In a manifesto dated the 1st of October, with obvious reference to Lord Auckland's manifesto issued the same day in 1838, he announced his intention to retire from Afghánistán, "content with the limits nature appears to have assigned" to the British empire in India. "Disasters unparallelled in their extent, unless by the errors in which they originated," had in one short campaign been completely avenged, and repeated victories had proved the invincibility of our arms. The policy of forcing a sovereign upon a reluctant people was expressly disavowed, and the Afgháns were left free to create a government for themselves, "amidst the anarchy which is the consequence of their crimes." A second proclamation, dated five days later, announced to the princes, chiefs, and people of India the coming restoration of the Gates of Somnáth to the country whence they had been carried off. "The insult of eight hundred years is at last avenged. The gates of the Temple of Somnáth, so long the memorial of your humiliation, are become the proudest record of your national glory, the proof of your superiority in arms over the nations beyond the Indus." The princes and chiefs of Sirhind, of Rajwára, of Málwa, and of Gujarát, to whom "this glorious trophy of successful war" would be committed, were enjoined to transmit the gates "with all honour" through their respective territories to "the restored Temple of Somnáth."

If the former manifesto suggested doubts of Lord Ellenborough's good taste in holding up Lord Auckland's policy and agents to public censure, the second effusion covered its author with universal ridicule. From one end of India to the other it was hailed by his own countrymen with bursts of inextinguishable laughter. What, they asked, could the princes and people of India—"my brothers and friends," as they were styled in this wonderful flight of Napoleonic fustian—care for the avenging of an insult eight centuries old, of which few natives remembered anything, and which millions of natives would deem no insult at all? The old Hindu temple whence the gates were said to have been taken had long been a crumbling ruin. Did the Indian Government propose to restore it at the public cost? Among the

native princes were many Mohammadans, some descended from the Afghán conquerors of India. In what light would they regard the honours destined for "this glorious trophy of successful war"? A few persons of a very serious turn could see nothing to laugh at in this stroke of farcical blundering; but they were ready to weep over it as a positive crime. And, to crown all, it still remains a question whether any gates were ever carried off from Somnáth to Ghazni, while those which Nott brought away from Mahmúd's Tomb appear to have been made not of sandal-wood, but of deal, and to date from a time much later than the eleventh century.*

* Kaye; Thornton's "Gazetteer of India."

CHAPTER VI.

SIND AND GWÁLIÁR.

WHILE Pollock's army was leisurely crossing the Land of the Five Rivers, the Governor-General was indulging his taste for theatrical pomp and show by planning out the details of such a pageant as British India had never before seen. On the 9th of December he arrived at Firózpur, where Lord Auckland and Ranjit Singh had exchanged such splendid greetings four years back in honour of an enterprise which had issued only in complete and merited failure. A brilliant gathering of princes, nobles, officers of State, and English ladies awaited his arrival, and the series of pageants designed to welcome the return of our victorious troops. From Lahór Sher Singh had sent his son and his chief Minister to take their part in the coming festival. The Army of Reserve was encamped on the neighbouring plains. Hundreds of elephants with painted trunks and gay bedizenments were daily trained in manœuvres worthy of the occasion. Triumphal arches had been set up in various places, and a bridge of boats, gay with blue, yellow, and red bunting had been thrown across the Satlaj. There was plenty of decorative brightness everywhere, if not much taste.

On the 17th Sir Robert Sale crossed the bridge at the head of his "illustrious garrison," who all laughed aloud as they passed under the gaudy gallows-like arch at the bridge-head.* Lord Ellenborough himself met the column at this spot and led it through a double line of elephants, who offered their salaams on bended knees, but somehow forgot to trumpet forth the shrill notes of welcome which they had been practising for some days past. The guns, however, did their duty, the bands struck up "the Conquering Hero," and regiment after regiment of Nicolls's Reserve presented arms to their war-worn comrades. Two days later Pollock's troops crossed the Satlaj, and on the 23rd Nott

* Low's "Life of Sir George Pollock."

also made his appearance, bearing with him the Gates of Somnáth on a triumphal car. Each general in turn was received at the bridge-head by Lord Ellenborough; but the other honours lavished on Sale's brigade were unaccountably withheld from the victors of Tazin, and the yet more deserving garrison of Kandáhár.* A round of feasting, pleasuring, reviews, and public speeches filled up the rest of that month. The Sepoys were regaled with heaps of "their favourite mehtoys" or sweetmeats—a fact announced to the public in one of Lord Ellenborough's windy orders. By way of fitting close to so grand a festival, the assembled troops—some 40,000 strong, with 100 guns—were manœuvred by Sir Jasper Nicolls on the great plain of Firózpur in the presence of Lord Ellenborough and a group of distinguished visitors from Europe as well as the East.

Thus ended the last act of a drama from which England reaped little save the credit of restoring her tarnished honour, while India was saddled with the whole cost of an enterprise decreed by an English Government in furtherance of England's fancied interests alone. Our countrymen in India could now, as they said, "once more look a native in the face;" but our latest victories had only deepened the hatred felt by every true Afghán towards the invaders of his native land. To the bitter memories stored up against us in Afghánistán the Governor-General had nearly added another. He had proclaimed his intention to set Dost Mohammad and his family free, but the Amir was at first commanded to present himself at the Governor-General's *Darbar* during the pageant at Firózpur. Happily in his calmer moments Lord Ellenborough shrank from inflicting a needless insult on the man who had suffered such cruel wrongs already at our hands; and Dost Mohammad was allowed to make his way without conditions back to that "poor and barren country," of which he never could understand why the rulers of India should have taken so much pains to deprive him.† Before leaving British ground, he knew that his brave son Akbar had returned to Kábul and wrested the supreme power from the Sádozai Prince Shahpur, who had fled for safety beyond the Khaibar.

* This piece of silly favouritism was wholly against the wish and the remonstrances of Sir Jasper Nicolls.

† On taking leave of Lord Ellenborough the latter asked him what he thought of the English after all he had seen of them in India. "I have been struck," he said, "with the magnitude of your power and resources . . . . but what I cannot understand is, why the rulers of such an empire should have gone across the Indus to deprive me of my poor and barren country."—Marshman.

The Army of Reserve was broken up in the following January, and Lord Ellenborough took his way to Agra with the reputed Gates of Somnáth in his train. At Mathra and Bindraban they found some worshippers, but at Agra their triumphal progress came to a sorry end. They were left to repose in the undisturbed oblivion of a lumber-room inside the Fort. It was at Agra that Lord Ellenborough, now made an Earl for his ostensible share in the late successes, invested Pollock and Nott with the Grand Cross of the Bath, the least possible reward that a grateful nation could have bestowed on the two men to whom Lord Ellenborough owed his earldom, and our Indian Empire its deliverance from a serious danger.* Sir Robert Sale had received the same honour a few months before. Among the new Knight Commanders was Sir Richard England, conspicuous chiefly for his repulse at Haikalzai. Medals and batta were freely distributed to every soldier who had served in the Campaign of 1842. Many of the younger officers were rewarded in various ways, but Havelock was not even made a C.B. Sir William Nott took up his post as Resident at Lucknow, and both he and Sir George Pollock received from the Court of Directors a pension of £1,000 a year. But not till 1872 was Pollock rewarded with a baronetcy at the prayer of Mr. Gladstone.

Pax Asiæ restituta—"Peace restored to Asia," was the high-flown legend of a medal which the Governor-General ordered to be struck in memory of the late campaign. A few months later another of his generals had conquered Sind. The Tálpur Amirs of that sunburnt country which stretches from the mouths of the Indus northward to the Panjáb frontier about Mithankót, had long acted with good faith in the spirit of the treaties forced upon them in 1839. They had borne with resignation the prolonged sojourn of British troops in their midst. They had not been backward in furnishing supplies and carriage for the troops employed between the Bolán and Kandáhár. They had paid the

* Writing home to the Secret Committee on July 8, the Governor-General said that his instructions of June 1 had "induced" General Pollock "to contemplate a forward movement" from Jalálabad, as if that was not the very course which Pollock had been urging upon him for some time past. Before the end of May Pollock had even sent off a letter to Nott, bidding him on no account to retire until he should hear again from himself. And in his letter of May 13 to Lord Ellenborough, a duplicate of which must have reached the latter before the end of June, he had plainly declared his intention to move forward as soon as he could. *This letter did not at first appear among the published papers*, although the duplicate was acknowledged on July 11. It was only brought to light by the efforts of Lord Palmerston and Lord Lansdowne.—Kaye; Low's "Life of Pollock."

tribute imposed upon them by superior force. They had shown no signs of exultation at the disasters which befell our arms. It was said, indeed, that two or three of them had entered into secret correspondence with neighbours who bore us no good-will. But some good judges more than doubted the genuineness of the letters which bore their seals, and Major Outram, the new Resident at Haidrabád, deemed the offenders guilty of nothing worse than the written expression of a wish to do us harm. Lord Ellenborough, however, had a large ambition, and a lively sense of the reverence owed by smaller potentates to the great Lord Paramount of all India. In the first months of his rule he had sent the Amirs, through Outram, a threatening message, which Outram wisely kept to himself.* He had already instructed his agent to make some new demands on the endurance of allies who had bitterly complained of the burdens laid upon them by Lord Auckland. These demands included a cession of territory in exchange for the tribute imposed in 1839.

For some months longer the Sind question remained in abeyance. But in September, Sir Charles Napier landed in Sind, to take command of the British garrison there quartered, and to act as chief political agent therein. Sir Charles had already made his mark as a brilliant soldier and an able administrator; but of India he knew nothing, and his self-confidence kept him blind to the extent of his own ignorance. His bearing towards the Amirs at his first interview with Mir Rustam and his fellow-chiefs betrayed an absence of all the courtesy due to princes not yet divested of all their sovereign rights. To him Lord Ellenborough now entrusted the duty of investigating the charges brought against the Amirs. In spite of special injunctions to decide only on full proof of guilt, Sir Charles would listen to no explanations, refused the princes a fair hearing in their own defence, and finally reported that Mir Rustam and two others had written treasonable letters, and otherwise broken the treaty of 1839.

In November, the draft of a new treaty was ready to be laid before the Amirs. They were now asked to surrender a much larger slice of territory than that proposed in April, to give up the right of coining money in their own names, and to make other concessions only less insulting to their proper pride. It is needless to inquire whether Lord Ellenborough willed all the consequences of such demands: Napier, at any rate, was ready and

* Thornton's "British India."

eager to act up to the spirit of any instructions that seemed likely to provoke a war. To him the possession of the Indus Valley had become the chief article of his military and political creed, and this feeling sharpened his readiness to believe the worst things charged against the Amirs.

In this mood Napier lent himself with fatal eagerness to the treacherous advances of Mir Ali Murád, who plotted to oust his brother, the aged Mir Rustam, from the headship of all the Amirs. He assured Napier that all the chiefs, save himself and another, were enemies to the English, and Napier willingly promised him the Turban, or symbol of headship, after his brother's death. Mir Rustam sought to throw himself upon Napier's protection, but the latter advised him to take shelter with Ali Murád. In due time the General learned that his advice had been taken, and that the poor old Amir of Khairpúr had solemnly resigned all power into his brother's hands. He suspected, indeed, what afterwards proved to be the fact, that Ali Murád had used fraud and violence to compass his own ends; and that suspicion must have been strengthened by Rustam's flight a few days after from his brother's fortress at Diji.* But it suited Napier's purpose at the moment to accept as valid an arrangement which secured him a faithful helpmate in his designs on the independence of Sind.

On hearing of the old man's flight, Napier issued a proclamation, charging him with defiance of the British Government, and declaring Ali Murád his lawful successor. It was in vain that Rustam sent his Minister to acquaint the General with the truth of the matter, and to assure him that his flight from Diji had been prompted by Ali Murád himself. Napier charged him with subterfuge, falsehood, and double-dealing, and refused to treat with him or any of his friends as the Rais, or supreme ruler of Sind. Meanwhile some of his kinsmen and followers had fled into the desert to Mir Mohammad's stronghold of Imámgarh. Thither Napier resolved to follow them, although no war was yet on hand. On January 5, 1843, he set out with a squadron of horse, two large howitzers, and 350 men of the 22nd Foot, mounted on camels, two to each in *kajáwas* or panniers. A rapid march of five days brought him to Imámgarh, which was found empty, and the fortifications were blown up with the powder they contained. It was a novel and brilliant feat of arms, but justification for it there was none.

* Thornton; Parliamentary Papers. The resignation said to have been written on a copy of the Korán was a mere forgery.

As a means of frightening the Amirs into submission, it was not without some effect. In the middle of December, while the new treaty was still under discussion, Napier had formally annexed the whole of the country between Róhri and the Bháwalpur frontier, and warned the ráyats to pay the Amirs no more rents after the 1st of January, 1843. To Mir Rustam's remonstrances the General replied with strong threats. At last, by the middle of January, the hapless Amirs were ripe to surrender at discretion. Outram himself, who had just returned from Bombay, was fain to counsel submission to the hard terms which Napier insisted on exacting. Yet even Outram had much ado to dissuade the Amirs from pressing their demands for redress of the wrongs inflicted through his brother's treachery on their beloved Rais. At Haidrabád, on the 12th of February, the hateful treaty was signed and sealed in Outram's presence by the assembled Amirs.

On his way from the fort where the treaty had been signed, Outram and his officers were assailed with curses from a furious crowd, who were hardly restrained from bloodshed by the presence of an escort furnished from the Amirs' own troops. Next day the Amirs sent to warn Outram that their Bilúchi soldiers were getting out of hand. If Outram stayed at the Residency they could not answer for the result. They had yielded all that we required of them, but the wrongs done to Mir Rustam and Napier's steady advance towards their capital had roused the Bilúchis into ungovernable fury. The English Resident refused to budge an inch or to place another sentry at his door. On the 15th a large body of horse and foot attacked the Residency on three sides, the fourth being happily guarded by the river, from which a Company's steamer kept up a serviceable fire. For more than three hours Outram's little garrison, a company of the 22nd Foot and a small body of Sepoys, the whole commanded by Captain Conway, nobly stood their ground against overwhelming numbers. When all hope of succour from below seemed in vain, Outram withdrew his garrison to the *Planet*, with a loss in all of seventeen killed and wounded.

This appeal to the sword was promptly answered. On the 17th Napier's little army, not three thousand strong, came in sight of about 20,000 of the Amirs' troops strongly posted by the village of Miáni, six miles only from Haidrabád. Napier's infantry advanced in échelon, with the guns on their right and a line of skirmishers in front. From the banks beyond the dry bed of the Fulaili the enemy kept up a heavy fire on our advancing troops.

For some hours neither side appeared to gain ground. But skilful leading and perfect discipline made up for numerical weakness; the three Sepoy regiments vied with the men of the 22nd Foot; and the fire from our guns was true and well sustained. By degrees the enemy fell back, still fighting bravely, until a dashing charge of the 9th Bengal Cavalry rolled up their right wing, while another body of horse swooped down towards their camp. Then at last the doubtful battle became for Napier a decisive victory. The Bilúchis withdrew from the field, leaving their guns, camp, and stores in our hands. Napier's losses in killed and wounded amounted only to 257, including nineteen officers slain.

No attempt was made to defend the capital, which Napier entered in triumph on the 20th. A vast wealth of treasure fell into his hands, which was afterwards divided among the captors; Outram alone steadily declining to take his share of the plunder which, to his thinking, had been gained by unlawful means. Six of the Amirs had already surrendered themselves; but others still kept the field, among them the gallant Sher Mohammad of Mirpúr, at whose call the Bilúchi warriors gathered in their thousands to strike one more blow for their country's freedom. At the village of Dabha, near Haidrabád, Sher Mohammad entrenched his army, about 20,000 strong. On the 24th of March Napier moved out to attack him with a force of 6,000 men. A cross-fire from his guns shook the enemy's centre; their left was broken by a spirited charge of the 3rd Cavalry and Jacob's Sind Horse; and the 22nd Foot swept forward under a heavy matchlock fire, to carry with a rush of levelled bayonets the entrenchments along their own front. On the left of our line Woodburn's Sepoy Brigade fought their way onwards with emulous ardour, and a brilliant charge of the Puna Horse and the 9th Cavalry rolled back the enemy's right. In spite of an obstinate resistance the Bilúchis were everywhere driven from the field with heavy slaughter, while the victors lost no more than two hundred and sixty-seven.

The crowning victory of Dabha or Haidrabád placed all Sind at the conqueror's mercy. The easy capture of Umarkót, a fortress in the eastern desert, where the great Moghal Akbar first saw the light, enabled Napier to report himself master of the whole country.* Sher Mohammad still kept the field with a few thousand staunch followers, but he too was finally routed in June by

* *Peccavi*, "I have sinned," was the punning message in which he first announced his success.

the bold Colonel Jacob; while another chief, who had been followed up by Colonel Roberts, gave up his sword to one of Roberts's officers. The despoiled Amirs were hunted into exile or carried off as State prisoners to Bombay. Their conquered kingdom was annexed to the Bombay Presidency, and Napier ruled as Governor the province he had won by the sword in furtherance of a policy condemned by every principle of justice and good faith. "We have no right," Napier himself had written, "to seize Sind; yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful, and humane piece of rascality it will be." There was more honesty—at any rate more truth in such a confession—than is to be found in the laboured pleadings which Lord Ellenborough addressed that June to the Court of Directors in vindication of the worst crime ever yet sanctioned by a ruler of British India.

In this attempt to make the worse appear the better cause, Lord Ellenborough argued that sound policy and a just regard for British honour forbade the withdrawal of our troops from Sind so soon after the retreat from Afghánistán. The Amirs had violated some parts of the commercial treaty; they had collected troops "contrary to their usage and without legitimate cause;" they had written letters of a hostile character; Mir Rustam's Minister had acted in a hostile spirit, and his master was clearly responsible for the acts of his servant. For these reasons it was needful to punish the Amirs by imposing upon them an amended treaty. Instead of openly rejecting, they professed their willingness to accept the new terms, and tried to deceive with such professions the General whose forces they were treacherously planning to attack and destroy. For such conduct signal punishment was the only possible return. After the victory of Miáni no half measures remained possible. The Amirs themselves were but "foreigners in Sind," who had no claim to consideration on the ground of ancient possession or of national prejudice, "still less on account of the goodness of their rule." They were accordingly dethroned and "removed beyond sea;" and a part of their forfeit dominions was given back to its former owners, the Nawáb of Bháwalpur and the Rajahs of Jodhpur and Jésalmir.

Of the value of these arguments the reader of the foregoing pages may be left to judge for himself. They resolve themselves into the assumption that British honour and the safety of India could only be assured by acts of gross oppression and glaring injustice on the part of a Government whose title to hold India was

not a whit stronger, nor many years older, than that of the Amirs to govern Sind. The Governor-General's prime object was to retain his hold on the Lower Indus for purposes alike of trade and military defence, and this end he sought to compass by the usual process of coercing a weak ally, without much regard for moral considerations. Perhaps he believed in his own sophistries, served up as they were in a sauce of full-flavoured rhetoric. But he who wills the end usually wills the means, and Lord Ellenborough had chosen for his agent an officer who "only wanted a pretext to coerce the Amirs," and who plainly foretold that the more powerful Government would "at no distant period swallow up the weaker." The acts of that agent, on whose sense of justice his employer owned to having "the fullest reliance," were formally confirmed by Lord Ellenborough himself in the letter to which we have referred.* That the policy thus defended has wrought no visible harm, but rather much good for the country thus annexed, that slavery was at once abolished throughout Sind, that peace and order were presently restored under an efficient police, that much was done in various ways to promote the welfare and contentment of the people at large—all this, of course, takes nothing from the censure which even at the time was passed by others than Outram only on the real authors of that rascally achievement, the conquest of Sind.

While Napier was diligently bending to the task of governing the province committed to his charge, the clouds of political trouble were fast gathering over the kingdom once ruled by Mádhaji Sindia and his able successor, Daulat Rao, who had made his peace with Lord Wellesley after the crushing defeat of his best troops at Laswári by the dauntless Lake. Daulat Rao Sindia dying in 1827, a kinsman, adopted by his widow, reigned in his stead. On the death of Jankaji Sindia, in February 1843, his young widow, Tára Bai, adopted for her heir a boy of eight named Bhágirat Rao, for whom Máma Sahib, an uncle of the late Mahárája, was appointed to act as Regent, in compliance with the Governor-General's strongly-expressed desire. His rival, Dáda Khásji, had secured the countenance of the young Queen and all her Court favourites, and a series of intrigues were forthwith set on foot for the purpose of ousting the nominee of the British Resident, Colonel Spiers.

At first Lord Ellenborough was inclined to support the Regent

* Thornton; Marshman.

of his choice by assembling troops on the Gwáliár frontier. But the order for assembling them was soon countermanded at the dissuasion of the Regent himself, and Máma Sahib was left to deal in his own way with the intrigues of a hostile Court, and the turbulent spirit of an army 40,000 strong. At last, in May, the Ráni played her trump card, and the Resident learned that Máma Sahib had been dismissed from office. It was now the Resident's turn to apply for the aid of British troops from Agra, the nearest station to Gwáliár. But Lord Ellenborough, who had by this time lost all faith in the Regent's fitness for his post, declined to let a single soldier pass the frontier without his personal direction.* He contented himself with scolding the late Regent as "unfit to manage men or women," ordered the Resident to hold no intercourse with Máma Sahib's successor, and addressed to the Queen-mother and her officers a grave lecture on the dangers that might befall a State almost surrounded by British territory, if the public peace were not preserved, nor any efforts made by the Gwáliár Government to act for that end in cordial concert with the Government of India.†

In spite of these warnings, the Queen and her party took their own way, trusting in the strength and spirit of their numerous troops, and paying small heed to mere words, unaccented by a show of force. Máma Sahib fled for his life to Sironj, and the Resident withdrew to Dholpur. The Ráni, getting somewhat frightened, begged the Resident to return; but this he declined to do so long as Dáda Khásji guided her counsels and mismanaged her affairs. To his demand that the Dáda should either be banished or made over to the British Government she sent back a spirited refusal.‡ Meanwhile affairs at Gwáliár kept falling into ever worse disorder. A few nobles headed a successful revolt against the Minister; but erelong he managed to escape from their hands, and to seat himself with the Ráni's aid more firmly than ever in his place of power. The overgrown army of Gwáliár grew more restless, more insolent, more ripe for mischief every day. A state of lawlessness prevailed throughout the country, which might at any moment lead to untoward results. Behind

* Thornton.

† Parliamentary Papers.

‡ The letter containing this demand was kept back by the Dáda from his mistress. This Lord Ellenborough denounced, in his wild way, as "an offence of a most criminal character against the State of Gwáliár." No subject of that State would be permit "thus to supersede the authority of his sovereign," as if the Ráni had ever been recognized by himself as sovereign.

Gwáliár also rose the vision of a great Sikh army waiting to make common cause with other enemies to the British rule. In a Minute of the 10th of August, Lord Ellenborough had already declared his reasons for resolving to form a camp of exercise "upon or near the Jamna." On the 1st of November, before setting out for Agra, he penned another Minute, unfolding his views of the present conjuncture, and of the manner in which he proposed to deal with it.

The Indian Government, he said with justice, had become the Paramount Power within the Satlaj. As such it was bound, for its own sake and that of humanity, to uphold with steady hand the right of repressing all forms of disorder within its own frontiers. "The withdrawal of our restraining hand would let loose all the elements of confusion. Redress for the daily occurring grievances of the several States against each other would again be sought, not from the superintending justice of the British Government, but from the armed reprisals of the injured; and bad ambition, availing itself of the love of plunder and of war, which pervades so large a portion of the people of India, would again expose to devastation countries which, under our protection, have enjoyed many of the advantages of peace." With regard to the affairs of Gwáliár, he held that a weak and pusillanimous policy would only tend to "remove the scene of a contest altogether inevitable, from Gwáliár to Allahabad." An affront of the grossest character had been offered to his Government, and a large army with a very numerous artillery lay within a few marches of the capital of the North-West Provinces. Still, under ordinary circumstances, wrote the Governor-General, "we might, perhaps, have waited upon time, and trusted to the disunion manifest among the chiefs, and the usual vicissitudes of an Indian Court to restore our influence at Gwáliár." But the events which had lately happened in the Panjáb—the murder, namely, of Sher Singh and his son, and the growing power of the Sikh soldiery—rendered a waiting policy impossible. With an army of 70,000 men, "within three marches of the Satlaj, confident in its own strength, proud of its various successes against its neighbours, desirous of war and of plunder, and under no discipline or control," it would be unpardonable not to take every precaution against its hostility, "and no precaution appears to be more necessary than that of rendering our rear and our communications secure by the re-establishment of a friendly government at Gwáliár."

It was this dread of the danger brewing beyond the Satlaj which

inspired and moulded Lord Ellenborough's further dealings with the Marátha kingdom, ruled by the house of Sindia. Arriving at Agra on the 11th of December, he ordered his Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Gough, fresh from his successful campaign in China,* to begin at once his march upon the Marátha capital. Sir Hugh's troops had hardly reached the Chambal at Dholpur, when the obnoxious Dáda Khásji was surrendered into British keeping and carried off a prisoner to Agra. The one prime object of the policy announced in the November Minute was thus obtained without firing a shot. But the Governor-General's appetite grew with eating. He had already warned the Ráni that further concessions would have to be made before his troops turned their faces homewards. The Gwáliár army for one thing must be considerably cut down. Nor could he tolerate the existence of a government unfriendly to its neighbours and powerless to maintain order at home. To the same effect he addressed the new Resident, Colonel Sleeman. At a conference held with certain of the Gwáliár chiefs at Dholpur on the 20th of December, he consented to stay the march of his troops if a treaty embodying all his demands should be ratified within three days.

On the following day the chiefs besought him long and earnestly to await at Dholpur, according to all former usage, the promised meeting with the young Mahárája and his mother. With joined hands they implored him to weigh well the step he was taking, and to forbear from crossing the Chambal with his army before the meeting took place. If he moved forward now, the house of Sindia would be disgraced for ever, and the troops at Gwáliár would be sure to regard him as an enemy rather than a friend. Deaf to all their pleadings, Lord Ellenborough at last agreed to meet the prince and his mother on the 26th at Hingona, a march beyond the Chambal, for the purpose of signing the new treaty.†

Sleeman also kept on warning the Governor-General of the feeling which prevailed at Gwáliár against the advance of a British army. On his way back from the capital he heard and saw enough to justify his worst forebodings. Crowds of soldiers filled the road to Dhanaila, guns were parked along the river, and the troops openly boasted their intention to drive Lord Ellenborough and his army back across the Chambal. Even the friendly chiefs in the British camp set off for Gwáliár to bear their part in the inevitable struggle.

* The war with China ended in 1842.

† Parliamentary Papers.

For two days the Governor-General halted at Hingona. But the Gwáliár soldiery had taken care that the Queen-mother and her son should not reach that place by the time appointed, and on the 28th of December Gough was ordered to prepare for an advance. Next morning his troops, about 11,000 strong, began their march towards Chaunda, where the enemy were reported to have taken their stand. No reconnaissance seems to have been attempted. The troops were marching as on a mere field-day; and the Governor-General, with the ladies of his camp, rode on elephants beside the advancing columns. Suddenly a round shot struck an elephant on the ear, and the fire from twenty-eight large guns posted about the village of Maháráj pur compelled Gough to revise at short notice his whole plan of attack. In default of heavy guns on our side, Littler's column was sent forward to storm the village and its defences, while Valiant's worked round their rear. After a fierce and bloody fight the guns were taken, and the village cleared of its brave defenders, who vainly opposed their swords to the British bayonet. Scott's cavalry, well seconded by Grant's gunners, broke up the enemy's horse. On the advance to Chaunda Valiant's brigade stormed three rows of entrenchments under a murderous fire from the guns that protected them. The main position at Chaunda was then carried with a desperate rush by Littler's warriors, foremost among whom were the 39th Foot and the 56th Bengal Sepoys. Fifty-six guns with many standards formed the trophies of a fight which cost the victors nearly 800 men; a loss, wrote Gough, "infinitely beyond what I calculated upon. Indeed, I did not do justice to the gallantry of my opponents."

On the same day another division of the British Army on its march to Gwáliár from Bundalkhand, was led by General Grey against 12,000 Gwáliár troops, posted with forty guns on the heights near Paniár. The infantry attack was opened by the 3rd Buffs, who broke the enemy's centre and drove them from height to height with the loss of nearly all their guns. With equal ardour the Sepoys of the 39th N.I. carried a hill commanding the enemy's left, and stormed a battery of two guns. Anderson's brigade completed the day's work by capturing the remainder of the guns.

On the day after this double victory the Ráni and her little son, with the leading nobles of Gwáliár, entered the Governor-General's camp to implore forgiveness for the past, and to hear what terms he might deign to offer. They were told in effect to refrain from all further hostilities, and to trust the good intentions of the

Indian Government, whose sole desire was to protect the Mahárája's person, to support his authority, and to restore the old relations of friendship between the two States. Three days later the victorious army encamped outside Gwáliár. On the 5th of January Lord Ellenborough laid before the Ráni's councillors the terms of a treaty which established a council of regency, bound to follow at need the advice of the British Resident. The young Sindia's majority was fixed at eighteen. The army of Gwáliár was reduced to 9,000 men with thirty-two guns, and a British contingent of 10,000, officered from the Indian armies, was to be maintained at the cost of the Gwáliár State. The Ráni, much to her disappointment, was shelved on a pension of three lakhs, or thirty thousand a year. The treaty, of which these formed the main articles, was ratified by Lord Ellenborough on the 13th January. By the 17th the bulk of the old army had quietly taken their discharge with a present of three months' pay; and the ranks of the new Contingent were already filling with the Rajputs and Brahmans who had fought against us at Maháráipur and Paniár.

On the 28th February, 1844, the Governor-General returned, after a prolonged absence, to his capital on the Húghli. An address from the citizens of Calcutta expressed the "hope that no further State emergency might arise to divert his Lordship's energies from measures of internal benefit, second only in real importance to those affecting public security." Some few measures of this nature had already been passed by the statesmen who filled his place at Government House. Certain improvements in the magistracy and the police of Bengal had been effected, chiefly through the agency of his Vice-President in Council, Mr. Wilberforce Bird. The heavy work of the Magistrate-Collector was lightened by the creation of Deputy-Magistrates, and the new office was thrown open to men of all classes, castes, and creeds. The ill-paid, neglected police of Bengal had long been a byword for venality and oppression. An attempt was made to increase their efficiency by establishing four grades of police *darogas* or headmen, at salaries rising to Rs. 100 a month. The State lotteries which had hitherto supplied the means of improving the Presidency towns were abolished, with Lord Ellenborough's sanction, in 1843. To Mr. Bird's persistent energy was also due the Act which abolished slavery throughout British India during the same year.*

Hardly had the Governor-General reached Calcutta when a new

* This measure had been projected by Lord Auckland.

36841

cause of anxiety began to trouble him. Symptoms of the mutinous spirit which some years later spread dismay and havoc through Upper India suddenly showed themselves in the Sepoy regiments ordered from Bengal for service in Sind. Spurred on partly by a natural dislike to crossing the Indus, partly by resentment at the loss of field-batta consequent on the annexation of Sind, several of these regiments had either refused to march at all, or had displayed an amount of sulky ill-feeling which might soon break out into open mutiny. Of these the 7th Cavalry, the 4th, 64th, and 69th Infantry, returned betimes to a better spirit; but the 34th Infantry maintained so rebellious a front that, on the 4th of March, Sir Hugh Gough ordered the disbanding of a regiment no longer worthy to be borne on the rolls of the Bengal Army. A few days later there was issued from Calcutta a General Order which virtually acknowledged the justice of the mutineers' claims, by allowing extra batta to the troops thenceforth employed in Sind.

One of the repentant regiments—the 64th, which had once formed part of Wild's beaten brigade at Pesháwar—betrayed fresh signs of mutiny in June, after its arrival at Shaikápur. Most of the Sepoys refused to take their pay, as being less than their colonel had promised them. They reviled and stoned their own officers; they hurled clods at General Hunter, who commanded the troops in Upper Sind. On the following day the brave old General again harangued them, but to little purpose. The most of them took their pay, but when the order came to unpile arms not a man save three would stir. Next day, however, the mutineers gave in, and returned quietly to their lines. Two days later the regiment was marched back to Sakhar, Hunter himself at their head. At that place they were formed up for parade, with the 13th Foot and a battery of guns awaiting the word to open fire upon them. Happily that word was not to be uttered. Under a promise of pardon for the rest of the mutineers if they would give up their leaders, thirty-nine of these were at once disarmed and marched off to prison by their own comrades. Thirty-eight of the number were condemned to death, but the merciful pleadings of the Court-Martial were not lost on the Commander-in-Chief, who commuted the sentence in every case but six.*

The mutinous spirit was not confined to the Bengal Army. At

* The colonel of the regiment was cashiered for his share in the matter.

Jabalpur the 6th Madras Cavalry mutinied for more pay. The 47th Madras Infantry had been sent round to Bombay under orders for service in Sind. The Marquis of Tweeddale, Governor of Madras, had taken upon himself to promise them pay at the rates laid down for service in Maulmain. When the Sepoys found that such rates would not be allowed in Sind they broke out in open mutiny on parade. Some of their leaders were arrested, and a timely advance of money pacified the remainder, who had better reason to complain of their masters than their masters had to punish them. But it became clear that neither Bengal nor Madras could be trusted to furnish troops for the defence of Sind, and from that time the duty in question devolved upon the Bombay Army alone.*

By this time, also, the days of Lord Ellenborough's rule had been numbered. If warlike achievements, set off by showy pageantry and frothy manifestoes, could win lasting honour for the head of a modern State; if a certain readiness to use and to reward the services of a splendid army could make up for all failures in the field of statesmanship, the Court of Directors should have been proud of such a ruler as Lord Ellenborough, even though he hated the civil services, disparaged the politicals, and wrote uncourteous letters to Leadenhall Street. To them, however, by no means thirsting for military renown or conquests alike unjust and barren, his merits seemed utterly overshadowed by his faults. They never knew what his next move might be, to what new turn of policy his rashness, his self-conceit, his unstable views, his spurts of theatrical fancy, might not commit them. His ways, in short, were much too meteoric for their simple needs. In spite of warm opposition from the Ministry and the Board of Control, they used for once their undoubted privilege, and recalled their rebellious servant from a post which, in their eyes, he had ceased to adorn.

The news of his recall was received in India by the native princes with a feeling of immense relief. As Sir Henry Lawrence jokingly remarked, they no longer raised their hands to their necks of a morning, to make sure that their heads were still upon their shoulders. On the 1st of August Lord Ellenborough steamed down the Húghli on his way home, regretted mainly by the army, for whose welfare he had always laboured with the zeal of an amateur in the art of war.

* Kaye; Marshman.

NOTE.

Sind, the country of the Sindhu or Indus, covers an area of 56,672 square miles, of which less than two million acres are cultivated. Its population of two millions and a third is largely Hindu by descent, but chiefly Mohammadan by creed. The greater part of the country is mere desert, the forests are few and small; but the belt of plain watered by the Indus bears good crops of wheat, barley, rice, and other grains, a fair amount of cotton, and a variety of fruit, including apples of a very fine sort. For many centuries down to 1843, Sind was ruled by a succession of Mohammadan dynasties, independent or tributary to some Arab Moghal or Pathan overlord. The latest of these, that of the Tálpur princes, held sway for about sixty years. Its chief towns are now Karáchi, Haidrabád, and Shaikápur. Under the old Hindu dynasties Aror and Brahmanabad were populous and important cities. In Sind, as in Egypt, much that is now desert was once a fertile and well-peopled land.

BOOK II.

LORD HARDINGE AND LORD DALHOUSIE.

1844—1856.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST SIKH WAR.

THE soreness which Lord Ellenborough's recall had engendered between the Ministry and the Court of Directors was presently healed by the naming of a successor agreeable to both parties. Their choice fell upon his brother-in-law, Sir Henry Hardinge, an old Peninsular hero of sixty, whose timely courage gave his countrymen the victory in the fearfully unequal fight of Albuera. Of his special fitness for the task of governing India little enough could be foregathered. But he had sat long in Parliament, had twice served successfully as Secretary-at-War, and twice for short periods as Secretary for Ireland; and the lowering aspect of affairs on the Satlaj frontier may have seemed to warrant the selection of a tried soldier and an able servant of the State to replace the haughty civilian whose quarrel with the India House had just cut short his conquering career. There was need of a "safe" man who would obey orders, study economy, pay due respect to the Civil Service, and not thirst too eagerly for warlike renown. At the farewell banquet given him by the Court of Directors Sir Henry Hardinge was enjoined, among other things, to set the Company's servants a good example of respect for the Court's authority, to deal gently with the Native States, and to pursue a policy of peace, retrenchment, and internal reform.*

On the 23rd of July, 1844, the new Governor-General landed at Calcutta, after a trying voyage down the Red Sea. He was the first Governor-General who had ever gone out to India by the route which a Company's steamer commanded by Captain Wilson had traversed for the first time in 1830. The successful voyages of the *Hugh Lindsay* and the unwearied labours of Lieutenant Waghorn had proved the advantages of a postal line through Egypt and the Red Sea, the old highway of trade between Europe and the East, over the long sea-voyage round the Cape of Good

* Sir H. Lawrence's "Essays."

Hope. In 1839 the town and peninsula of Aden, at the eastern or Yemen mouth of the Red Sea, a place once famous as a Roman port in the days of Constantine, were captured by a small force sent from Bombay to compel the surrender of a place which a year before the Sultan of Yemen had agreed for a certain sum to make over into British hands.* The new possession grew into a fortress and a coaling station for steamers of the great Peninsular and Oriental Company, who began in 1843 to carry the English mails by the new "overland" route to Calcutta once a month. On his way out, Sir Henry Hardinge went over the Rock of Aden, already bristling with guns and crowned with strong defences, too strong, costly, and extensive, in his opinion, for the purpose of withstanding an assault of Arabs or any other likely foes.†

About a fortnight after he had taken the oath of office, the new Governor-General had to deal with the questions raised by the growing misrule and anarchy in Oudh. The new king, Mohammad Amjad Ali, had discarded his father's Minister in favour of a worthless upstart, who paid a yet viler favourite to do his work. The king himself, sunk in sloth and sensuality, gave no thought to public affairs, no heed to the counsels of the British Resident. Court favourites sold every office in the State. The Talukdárs, or great landlords, defied from their wood-girt strongholds the power of the Government, made war at pleasure against each other, and eked out their own revenues by murderous raids against neighbouring villages and merchants travelling on the highways. The strong everywhere preyed upon the weak, and crime in every form stalked about unpunished. The public revenue could be collected only by force of arms, or by a compromise with the more powerful barons. Law and justice became things unknown in a country where the worst criminal could make his peace at Court by surrendering a part of his ill-gotten plunder.‡ No wonder that Pollock, who had replaced Nott as Resident at Lucknow, urged the Governor-General to enforce the provisions of former treaties by taking into his own hands the government of a country thus brought to chaos and the verge of general ruin.

Sir Henry Hardinge, however, shrank from taking strong

* Low's "History of the Indian Navy."

† Lawrence's "Essays."

‡ Lawrence; Kaye. The picture drawn by Lawrence in 1844 is completed in detail by the letters and reports of Colonel Sleeman, who succeeded Pollock as Resident at Lucknow.

measures at the outset of his rule. Addressing the king as a sincere friend and well-wisher, he solemnly warned him against the inevitable results of continued disregard to the British Agent's advice and remonstrances. Three years later the Governor-General himself visited Lucknow, where Wajid Ali, the yet more worthless son of a worthless father, then held his Court. Affairs had, meanwhile, been going from bad to worse, and now the new king was plainly told to set his government in order, on pain of seeing himself erelong divested of all power to work further mischief in his own realm. If no signs of amendment became visible in the next two years, the Indian Government, in the interests of humanity, would step in and take upon itself the task of restoring order and peaceful well-doing in Oudh. A rough plan of the reforms especially needful was then laid before the young king, whose terror could find no vent in words. On a sheet of paper he wrote down his thanks for the Governor-General's courteously uttered counsels, which he would regard as those of a father addressing his son.* How far he strove to act upon those counsels the reader will presently see.

The same spirit of wise forbearance and friendly firmness which marked his treatment of the King of Oudh inspired Sir Henry's dealings with other of the Native and border States. Such men as Low at Haidrabád in the Dakhan, and Henry Lawrence at Káthmandú, might safely be trusted to hold diligently aloof from the intrigues and quarrels of the Court to which they were deputed. To "let people alone and obey orders," was the principle on which Lawrence acted in Nipál amidst the massacres which preluded Jang Bahádur's advent to power. In the Nizam's dominions, as in Oudh, the great landlords, aided by bands of armed Arabs and Rohillas, kept the country in chronic disorder, whilst the Nizam's own troops were always breaking into mutiny for want of pay. In 1846 it became needful to employ the British Contingent in the task of suppressing a dangerous revolt, and next year the Resident was driven to use strong language, enforced by Sepoy bayonets, for the quelling of fierce commotions in the capital itself.

Meanwhile a body of Rohilla Patháns from the Dakhan had offered their swords to Mir Mohammad Khán, the leader of an insurrection against the Queen-Regent of Bhopál, a little state on the southern frontier of Gwáliár. Mir Mohammad, a disgraced

* Kaye.

kinsman of the young Queen, encamped near the capital in 1846, with so strong a force that the Regent was glad to see the troops of the Bhopál contingent advancing to her aid. A short but sharp fight resulted in the rout of the rebel army, with little loss to the victors. Mir Mohammad surrendered before the battle, but his place was filled by the brave Rohilla chief, Karim Khán, who died fighting at the head of his troops. But for their timely defeat, the flames of rebellion might soon have spread to the neighbouring province of Ságar, which in 1818 had been ceded to the English by the Bhosla Rajah of Berár.

Almost two years earlier several thousand of our Madras and Bombay troops were engaged for months in a little war which taxed their courage and endurance, while it gave new scope to the commanding energies of the Indian Bayard, Colonel James Outram.* It began in the highlands of Kolapúr, a small Marátha kingdom still ruled by an heir of the house of Sivaji. Many lives of officers and men were expended in carrying the stockades and hill forts held by chiefs who fiercely resented the reforming ventures of Daji Krishna Pandit, then acting as Regent for the boy Rajah, under the control of a British Agent at Belgaum. The Pandit was for yielding to the demands of the malcontent nobles, whose grievances deserved inquiry, if not redress. But the British Agent would hear of no concessions to men with arms in their hands, and in September 1844 our troops began moving towards the scene of disorder.† The fort of Samangarh was stormed in October, and on the 1st of December Panála shared the same fate. Before the year's end every fort in the country was in our hands or at our mercy, and the insurgent chiefs were flying for shelter across the border.

But the flames of revolt had spread meanwhile among the rocks and jungles of Sáwant Wári, a small Marátha State lying between Goa and Kolapúr. This corner of the Southern Kánkan, still ruled by a Sir Dessai descended from the Bhosla chief‡ who made a treaty with the Company in 1730, had often provoked the interference of its powerful neighbours at Bombay. The strip of seaboard that once belonged to it had passed into British hands in requital for frequent piracies charged against the subjects of the Sir Dessai. Since 1838 the country had been governed by

* Such was the title given him by his famous opponent, Sir C. Napier.

† Lawrence.

‡ Phund Sáwant gave his name to the Wári country, now known as Sáwant Wári.

British officers in behalf of a ruler found incapable of keeping order among the unruly people. But the latter loved their temporary masters so little, that by the end of 1844 nearly all their chiefs had taken up arms. The defeat they inflicted on four hundred Sepoys caught in the jungles produced for the moment a sort of panic at Wári and Vingorla. Happily Outram, who had just returned to Bombay on his way home, at once offered to lead a force of light troops into the field. His presence in camp soon gave things a new turn. Of the three columns appointed to act in concert against the insurgents, Outram's alone was thoroughly successful. In spite of all hindrances he made his way from one point to another of an unknown and difficult country, capturing stockades, villages, and forts, without a check, and driving the remnant of the insurgent chiefs across the border into the Portuguese territory of Goa.* By the end of January the last band of insurgents had been dispersed, and their boldest leaders slain or captured. At Kolapúr a British officer presently replaced the native Minister, and the affairs of Sáwant Wári were entrusted to the capable hands of Captain Jacob. For Outram himself was reserved the important post of Resident of Satara, where the elder branch of Sivaji's line still flourished in the person of Rajah Partab Singh.

While the year 1845 seemed passing away in perfect peace, suddenly over the north-western frontier there burst forth a mighty storm of war. It came from the Land of the Five Rivers, the country ruled for so many years by the strong-handed, clear-brained, jovial Ranjit Singh, whose warlike ambition had never once tempted him to risk an encounter with his powerful neighbour beyond the Satlaj. His death in 1839 gave the signal for disunion among the chiefs whose power he had broken, and the kinsmen who severally claimed to fill his place. Karak Singh, his next successor, was a mere imbecile, and his son, the youthful Nao Nihal Singh, who governed for him, fell an early victim to an accident, said to have been contrived by the Jammu Rajahs, whose growing power he had striven to curb. His mother seized upon the reins of government, Karak Singh having just before died, to hold them for little more than two months. In January 1841, Karak's brother, Sher Singh, was strong enough to march his soldiers into Lahór; but it needed a far stronger hand than his to curb the unruly spirits by whose help he had risen to power.

* Lawrence; Sir F. Goldsmid's "Life of Outram."

Their growing lawlessness vented itself in deeds of outrage which dismayed their nominal master, and vexed the hearts of his English allies, then floundering deeper and deeper in the mud of their Afghán policy. After a while the Sikh army grew weary of their own rioting, and settled down into that state of organized self-government which inevitably leads to the overthrow of civil freedom and established law. Like Cromwell's soldiery, they would obey their own officers, if only they might lay down the law in things political for the chosen Ministers of the State.*

Like Cromwell's soldiery, the Sikh troops were bound together by ties yet stronger than class pride. They claimed to represent the whole body of the *Khálsa*, the holy race of believers in the purified Brahmanism first taught by Nanak in the 15th century, and developed to worldlier issues by the Sikh Mahomet, Guru Govind, the tenth Guru or High Priest of the Khálsa sect. Nanak had proclaimed the religious brotherhood of Hindus and Mussulmans in words which reflect the desire of thoughtful minds in all ages: "He only is a good Hindu who is just, and a good Mohammadan whose life is pure." Against caste tyranny, corrupt doctrine, and superstitious rites he waged war with the earnestness of a Jewish prophet. A succession of "Gurus" handed on his teaching and swelled the numbers of the new sect.† Among the Hindu Játs of the Panjáb and Sirhind the new faith won many converts; but in the Mohammadans, who then ruled India, the Sikhs found only cruel oppressors, whose ceaseless persecutions finally drove them into arms. Under the warlike Guru Govind and his successors they fought on with varying fortune, until at last the peaceful followers of Nanak wielded military rule from the Indus to the Jamna, and held under a yoke of iron the crushed Mohammadans of the Panjáb.

For many months from the middle of 1841 the Sikh soldiery were engaged, partly in carrying on a disastrous war against the Chinese in Tibet, partly in lending a doubtful aid to their English allies in the work of requiting the tragic issues wrought by Afghán treachery amidst the snows of the Kurd-Kábul. Distrust and scorn on our side embittered the feelings with which the Sikh army regarded a power that seemed bent on thwarting their every effort to enlarge the dominions of Ranjit Singh. Nor, with all his readiness to use the British alliance as a weapon against his

* Cunningham's "History of the Sikhs."

† They were called Sikhs, or disciples, from the Hindustani word *sikhna*, "to learn."

turbulent soldiers and ever-quarrelling Sardárs, could Sher Singh free himself from the fear of seeing his own kingdom swallowed up by the mighty neighbour whose arm was already enfolding Sind. After the return of the Avenging Army to India, he sought to balance the power of the Jammu Rajahs by recalling to his Court their old rivals, the Sindanwála Sardárs. But this well-meant step cost him dear. His Vazir, the crafty Dhiyán Singh of Jammu, one of Guláb Singh's brothers, lured his new rivals into a plot against their common master, who was shot dead on the 15th of September, 1843, during a review of some new Sikh levies. But the arch-traitor Dhiyán Singh gained nothing by his crime, for he, too, was shot down by his fellow-plotters on the very day of his seeming triumph. He left a son, however, Hira Singh, who speedily avenged his father's murder. Won by the young man's prayers and promises, a large force stormed the citadel of Lahór; Léna Singh was slain on the spot, and Ajit Singh, the actual murderer, perished in a last attempt to escape over the lofty walls. The child Dhulíp Singh, a son of Ranjit's by his favourite wife, was set upon the throne, with Hira Singh for his Vazir.

A child-sovereign, and a Minister who owed everything to his troops, were little likely to make much way against the greed of a dominant army, and the plottings of rebellious chiefs. Additions granted to the pay of the former served only to feed its arrogance and deepen its sense of power. Distrust, soon ripening into active hatred, spread like a pestilence everywhere about the Court. The Khálsa soldiery could not forget their old dislike of the Jammu chiefs, headed by the strong and crafty Guláb Singh, a Rájput who had risen in the service of the great Ranjit. To him the young Vazir appealed for help against his treacherous uncle, Sucháit Singh. On the other hand, Jawáhar Singh, uncle to the little Mahárája, was working upon the troops to aid in rescuing his nephew from the hands of the hateful Jammu chief. Hardly could the Minister elude one peril when another sprang up before him. Jawáhar Singh was imprisoned, and the army pacified, but straightway two sons, real or adopted, of Ranjit Singh rose in arms at Siálkot. No sooner had these been brought to reason in the spring of 1844, than Sucháit Singh tried to raise the Lahór regiments against his nephew. He, too, was speedily put down through the bribes or the eloquence of Hira Singh. In May a fresh revolt was headed by two of the Sindanwála Sardárs. Once more the Vazir appealed, not in vain, to the loyalty of the assembled Khálsa, and the death of the rebel leaders soon ended the revolt.

For a few months longer the brave young Minister maintained his uneasy post. But the intrigues of his closet-counsellor, the Pandit Jalla, brought him into collision with the wily Guláb Singh, and the Pandit's rash speeches against the Queen-mother and her friends upset the loyalty of troops already angered by the fines and other penalties inflicted on several of the Sikh Sardárs. Before the end of December, 1844, both Minister and Pandit were flying for their lives in vain from the pursuit of foes wrought up to the needful pitch of savagery by the artful eloquence of the Queen-mother herself.*

From that time forth the commotions in the Panjáb kept up an answering turmoil in the hearts of English statesmen beyond the Satlaj. At first, indeed, the Khálsa soldiery were content to turn their arms against the wily Ulysses of Jammu, while the Ráni's brother, Jawáhar Singh, and her Brahman paramour, Lál Singh, were allowed to share between them the chief posts in the Government at Lahór. After some weeks of anxious manœuvring, Guláb Singh had to save his capital from storm by journeying to Lahór under a powerful escort of Sikh troops, who, halting between suspicion of his aims and gratitude for his timely *largesses*, treated him half as a prisoner, half as the destined head of a strong Sikh government. Appearing at Lahór in April, 1845, Guláb Singh found it still his best policy to bow before the rising star of Jawáhar Singh, the new Vazir; and so, after yielding up a monstrous cantle of his wealth in money and lands, and seeing the young king betrothed to a daughter of the Attari chief, Chattar Singh, he quietly betook himself to his native hills before the hatred of his enemies should have time to work him further mischief.

Erelong the new Vazir underwent his fate at the hands of those who had lifted him into power. Ranjit's rebellious son, Peshawara Singh, had once more set up the standard of revolt in the strong fortress of Atak, on the Indus. A month later the luckless claimant to his father's throne surrendered to Chattar Singh, who led him captive to Lahór. His subsequent murder, planned in secret by the revengeful Vazir, speedily redounded to the latter's own undoing. Through a meeting of regimental Panchayats, or committees of five, the wrathful soldiery called Jawáhar Singh to account for his act of treason to the Sikh commonwealth. On the 21st of September, 1845, seated on an elephant with the young

* Cunningham.

king by his side, and a heap of gold and jewels ready for use among his judges, he appeared before the assembled Khálsa to make atonement for his misdeeds. His bribes and promises were of no avail. They took the boy away from his side, and a party of soldiers, told off for the purpose, shot the condemned traitor to death.*

For some weeks afterwards no man was found bold enough to fill a post which left its holder at the mercy of an army dangerous alike to friends and foes. With the help of such able counsellors as Dinanáth and Nuruddin the Government went on with tolerable smoothness under the nominal headship of the Queen-mother. Early in November, however, Lál Singh was proclaimed Vazir, with Tej Singh for his commander-in-chief, in view of approaching war with the Power whose gathering troops seemed to challenge it from their own side of the Satlaj.

That war must come sooner or later had long been the general belief both in our own provinces and the Panjáb. That it would come in the shape of a sudden and seemingly causeless raid, effected by the whole strength of the Sikh army, was a likelihood to which not one Englishman in India seems to have given a serious thought. Our countrymen at that time despised the Sikh soldiery too much to credit them with so bold a game.† It is even doubtful whether the Sikhs themselves quite made up their minds until the last moment to dare the issue of a struggle which the wiser Ranjit would never have provoked.‡ There is no doubt, however, that neither Sir H. Hardinge nor any of his officers reckoned on aught more serious than raids of plundering horsemen and loose bands of Akáli fanatics across the frontier. No one dreamed, in short, that the Sikh army, as an army, would be mad enough to cross the Satlaj at a time when the Indian Government had no war or domestic trouble on its hands.

Up to a certain point, however, the Governor-General stood forearmed against sudden dangers. He had not been a month in India when he began quietly and gradually to strengthen all the posts that guarded his north-western frontier. Before November, 1845, he had thus raised the garrisons of Firózpur, Ludiána, and Ambála to a total strength of 30,600 men, with 68 guns, or more than double the numbers collected by Lord Ellenborough. At

* Cunningham.

† Lawrence at this time stood nearly alone in thinking favourably of Sikh soldiership. So little indeed was thought of it that Lord Auckland, in 1841, prepared to send 11,000 troops to coerce the whole Sikh army.

‡ Lawrence.

Meerut also a reserve of nearly 10,000 men, with 26 guns, was ready to move forward in case of need.* Barracks for English troops at Firózpur were ordered and finished within nine months from his landing in India. By his orders the fifty-six large boats which Lord Ellenborough had prepared in Sind, were brought up betimes to Firózpur. Eleven hundred horses for his guns were borrowed from the Governors of Madras and Bombay. A regiment of dragoons was marched up from the latter Presidency. The arsenal at Delhi was kept in full work. In Sir George Clerk, the new Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, the Governor-General found an active helpmate in the task of gathering supplies and equipments for his troops. Major Broadfoot, of Jalálabad renown, had lately been summoned from Tenasserim to act as British Agent for the North-Western frontier, a post which no officer was on the whole better qualified to fill.

All these signs of unrest beyond the Satlaj may have helped, however, to confirm the Sikhs in their growing dislike and distrust of the Power whose latest conquest seemed to betoken a new danger to the Khálsa rule. They could not but remember that in 1838 the whole force disposed behind our north-western frontier fell short of 7,000 men; that the retreat from Kábul in 1842 had been followed up by the conquest of Sind, and by the rout of a powerful Marátha army in Gwáliár; and that a former Governor-General had proposed to aid a Sikh ruler in putting down his own troops, the flower of the Khálsa brotherhood. In our preparations for defence they saw only a new menace to themselves. If we meant no harm, why was Napier parading a strong force near the Multán frontier, and why were 10,000 men keeping guard at Firózpur alone? For what purpose, too, was Broadfoot drilling the crews of the bridge-boats forwarded from Sind? If our aims were peaceful, why had the new Agent already claimed for his Government the Cis-Satlaj States, some of which belonged in fact to Lahór? His high-handed interference in the affairs of Anandpur-Makhowál, in spite of its acknowledged dependence on Lahór, did much to inflame the bitter feelings of those who, rightly or wrongly, regarded him as their personal foe. What Mulráj, the new Governor of Multán, thought of our policy, may be gathered from his asking Broadfoot what he was to do, should the Lahór troops march against him to enforce compliance with

* The whole strength of these garrisons had thus been raised from 17,612 men with 66 guns, to 40,523 men with 94 guns. The two regiments of foot quartered in the hills are not included.

the demands made by the Sikh Government on their refractory subject.*

Looking at the state of things on the Satlaj frontier, at the general tone of Anglo-Indian journalists and politicians, at Napier's movements south of Multán, and his published sayings as to the need of British interference in the Panjáb, we may well believe that to the bulk of the Sikh soldiery and Sardárs a war with the English seemed a certainty which might come upon them at any moment, but which they could in nowise avert. That such was their view of the conjuncture may readily be allowed, even by those who deny the justice of their alarm at the precautions taken by the Indian Government in its own defence. At such a moment of excited feeling on both sides, it was not very hard for the wily statesmen and selfish courtiers of Lahór to rid themselves of a standing nuisance by goading a powerful army, greedy for more pay or plunder, and inspired perhaps by a certain faith in its own destiny, into a sudden and premature attack on its inevitable foe. While the chiefs of the Lahór Government were trying their best to inflame the minds of their soldiery to the proper pitch, the sequestering of two Sikh villages near Ludiána, and the swift approach of the Governor-General towards the frontier, clinched the arguments which Lál Singh and Tej Singh might else have pleaded long enough in vain. The minds of the Khálsa were made up. Before the end of November troops were pouring in swift succession out of Láhor, bound, as their criminal masters hoped, to sure destruction.† On December 11, 45, they began crossing the Satlaj, and three days later a large body of Sikh regulars had taken up its position not far from Firózpur.

The garrison of that post, 10,000 strong, was commanded by Sir John Littler, a Company's officer who had won his latest laurels at Maháráipur. Leaving half his troops to protect the large, ill-fortified cantonment, he marched out with the rest to meet an enemy who outnumbered him by ten to one. But the Sikhs declined the challenge thus boldly given. Whether they were not yet prepared to try the mettle of British troops, or whether their treacherous leaders, Lál and Tej Singh, dissuaded them from losing time in attacking so weak a foe; certain it is, that, instead of trying to crush Littler, they turned aside to intrench their main body some ten miles off at Firózshahr, while

* Cunningham.

† The Lahór *Darbar*, or Council, declared war on the 17th November.

20,000 pushed on towards Múdki in hopes of taking Gough's advancing troops by surprise.

The hope was nearly fulfilled. On the 11th of December the news of the Sikh advance towards the Satlaj found Sir Hugh Gough preparing to give a grand ball in his camp at Ambála. The ball had to be given up, and next morning Sir Hugh started, with such troops as he could muster, for the scene of strife.* In seven days his force of 11,000 men, with forty-two guns, mostly six-pounders, marched no less than 170 miles. On the afternoon of the 18th he halted his men near the village of Múdki, about twenty miles from Firózpur and seventy-five from Lúdiána. Weary with long trudging over heavy sand under a hot sun, and fainting for want of sleep, food, and water, our soldiers looked for a few hours of rest and refreshment before renewing their daily toil. They had not been halted many minutes when tidings reached the ever-active Broadfoot that the enemy were near at hand.† Falling into rank at once—it was nearly 4 P.M.—the troops plodded on towards a great cloud of dust, which covered the front of a Sikh army 20,000 strong, with twenty-four guns, many of which were twelve-pounders. Behind frequent copses and low sandhills lay screened the enemy's infantry and the guns, which now opened a heavy fire on Gough's advancing line, while swarms of Sikh horsemen guarded either flank. A brisk fire from our guns preluded a successful charge of British cavalry on the Sikh left. Erelong Brigadier Brook pushed his batteries up to the jungle under a murderous hail of bullets and grape-shot, while Gough's infantry, formed in échelon of lines, swept onward to grapple with the Sikh foot, now scarcely visible for the wood and the fast-waning daylight.† One Sepoy regiment fell back in sheer dismay, until Havelock, riding up, assured them that "the enemy was in front and not behind them." Bravely did the Khálsa fight on beside their guns, but the rolling fire of musketry in their front, and the repeated onsets of cavalry on their flanks, forced them gradually to give way. At length the British infantry, led by Smith, Gilbert, and McCaskill, lowered their muskets to the charge. The tramp of their disciplined onset boded mischief to all who awaited it, and the Sikh battalions wavered, turned, and fled, leaving seventeen guns in the victors' hands. "Night alone," said Sir Hugh Gough, "saved them from worse disaster," and perhaps his weary soldiers were not sorry for the darkness which gave them time for the rest they sorely needed.

* Marshman. † Lawrence.

The victory had been won with a loss of two hundred and fifteen killed and six hundred and fifty-seven wounded. Among the slain were the quartermaster-general, Sir Robert Sale, and Sir John McCaskill, who commanded a division of foot. Two aide-de-camps of Sir H. Hardinge who had witnessed the fight were also slain; while Major Patrick Grant, who acted as Adjutant-General, was badly wounded as he encouraged the infantry on to the last decisive charge against the Sikh guns.*

A few days before the battle of Múdki the Governor-General had proclaimed the whole of the Sikh possessions on the left bank of the Satlaj forfeit to the East India Company. Down to the last moment, in spite of Broadfoot's earnest messages, he had refused to forestall attack by moving one step forward in self-defence. He acted on the principle which old Polonius set before his son:—

> "Beware
> Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
> Bear't that th' opposer may beware of thee."

Like every soldier of true worth and courage, he shrank from the favourite resource of vulgar statesmanship—an appeal to the brutal logic of guns and bayonets. If the event proved him no wiser than his neighbours, he still showed himself prompt and able to cope with the new emergency. As soon as he learned that a great Sikh army had crossed the Satlaj, he bent himself to the work before him with a vigour admirable for his years. He called up troops from Lúdiána to guard his supplies at Bassián, and to reinforce Gough's small army on its way to meet the enemy. He sent all his spare carriage to bring up the tired men of the two British regiments, which had hurried down from the Simla Hills at a pace seldom equalled, to join the Commander-in-Chief. Thanks to his exertions, they reached Gough's camp the day after the battle of Múdki.

With characteristic courtesy, the Governor-General now waived his right to the chief command, the right which had been exercised by Lord Cornwallis and Lord Hastings, and placed himself as second in command under the orders of Sir Hugh Gough. The 20th of December was spent in making ready for a fresh movement against the foe. At length, on the morning of the 21st, the British troops set forth to meet Sir John Littler, who, with 5,000

* The splendid 3rd Dragoons lost two officers, five sergeants, one trumpeter, and fifty-two rank and file in killed alone.

of his Firózpur garrison and four field-batteries, had been ordered the night before to join the main body for the purpose of making a combined attack on the Sikh entrenchments at Firózshahr. Leaving his camp and pickets standing, in order to deceive Tej Singh's outposts, Littler joined hands with Gough about noon when the latter was only a mile or so from the Sikh position. Precious time was lost in arranging the details of the grand attack, which began about three in the afternoon with a movement against that face of the Sikh intrenchment which looked towards Firózpur and the open country.

Around the village of Firózshahr the Sikhs had for some days been busily intrenching themselves in a kind of oblong square, a mile long by half a mile deep. More than a hundred guns, many of great calibre, were ready to do their worst in aid of an army numbering perhaps some 35,000 men,* of whom 10,000 were horse. About a third of the whole were regular infantry, drilled till lately by French and Italian officers—men of tried courage, high enthusiasm, and steady discipline; while the Sikh gunners had already shown themselves second to none in any native army. It was against the longest face of the intrenched camp that our troops were led, over ground flat and open, save where it was dotted by patches of low jungle. Their strength amounted to 17,500 men, supported by sixty-nine light field-guns. Two regiments of horse from Firózpur added something to the strength of an arm which had suffered heavily in the last fight.

It was very late in the day, at a season when the days are shortest, to begin a movement which could not anyhow be finished before dark. The seeming madness of it could be justified only by its complete success, or else excused on the plea of sheer necessity. How far it proved successful we shall see presently. Its necessity might almost be inferred from the mere fact of its having been sanctioned by the Governor-General himself. Whoever was to blame for deferring the attack to so late an hour, to have put it off until the morrow would only have strengthened the Sikh array by the force which Tej Singh kept on guard about Firózpur, while Gough's troops, after passing the sharp winter night without food, water, or shelter, would have proved so much the less fit for their destined work. A prolonged delay at Múdki, to await the arrival of fresh troops and heavier guns, would have endangered the safety of Firózpur, perhaps of Lúdiána, and

* It seems hopeless to get at the exact numbers. The estimates vary from 50,000, obviously too many, to 20,000, certainly much too few.

emboldened the myriads of Sikh horsemen to spread havoc, dismay, and disorder throughout the country between the Satlaj and the Jamna.* To attack the intrenchment on its longest face was another necessity imposed by the lateness of the hour. There was no time left for a turning movement, which might after all have ended in failure; for the Sikh position, according to Sir Henry Lawrence, was "not to be outflanked," and one side of it was nearly as formidable as another. Gough, moreover, who was no mean strategist before a fight, attacked that side which least exposed him to the danger of losing touch with his rear.

Under a scathing fire, well-aimed and swiftly delivered, against which our light field-pieces could make no head, the British line moved forward, partly in échelon; Sir H. Gough leading the right wing, Sir H. Hardinge the left. Sir John Littler commanded the left division of infantry, Major-General Gilbert the centre, and Brigadier Wallace the right, while Sir Harry Smith's division with a few light guns and some cavalry were held in reserve. The rest of the artillery advanced between the infantry divisions of the first line. Up to the intrenchments came the British troops in the teeth of such a storm of roundshot, shell, and grape, as might well have made the boldest for a moment quail. But to advance was better than standing still. Over the intrenchments they rode or scrambled with a courage that nothing seemed to check. But the fight was not to be won so easily. Behind the Sikh guns stood the bold Sikh infantry, whose steady firing made some of their assailants recoil again and again in ever-growing disorder, until the 62nd Foot, followed by most of their native comrades on either flank, wavered, broke and fled towards the rear.

This happened on the left of our line, where the enemy's works were strongest. Towards the right our soldiers were more successful. The brigades led by Wallace and Gilbert stormed the batteries in their front, drove back the Sikh foot, and only the growing darkness checked their further advance. But elsewhere the enemy either remained sole masters of the field, or shared it unequally with straggling bodies of our own troops. In vain had the noble 3rd Dragoons made brilliant charges on batteries taken at the cost of many valuable lives.† In vain had

* They had set out from Mudki in light marching order with no baggage, and the wells around Firózshahr were few and far apart.—Lawrence; Marshman's "Life of Havelock."

† They charged over the trenches, stormed the guns behind, swept through the

Sir H. Smith's reserve of infantry been hurled for a time successfully against another part of the intrenched camp. For that night the battle, if not lost, was certainly far from won. Nearly half our infantry had fallen back from the fighting line. The remainder, tired out, thirsty and hungry, pinched with the bitter cold, lay down for their dreary bivouac under the frosty twinkling stars, without cloaks to cover them or food to recruit their failing strength, with a burning camp in front, and some of the enemy's guns still playing upon them a few hundred yards off. Men of different companies, regiments, brigades, lay clubbed together in helpless crowds. Exploding tumbrils deepened the alarm and discomfort caused by the rushing shot that found its mark whenever a fire was lighted to thaw our soldiers' freezing limbs. So sharp was the sting of this new trial, that about midnight Sir H. Hardinge himself led the 80th Foot and the 1st Bengal Europeans against a great gun which kept dealing havoc among their wearied ranks. The gun was taken and spiked, but other guns still sent forth their deadly messengers under the struggling moonlight into other parts of Gough's line. Our own artillery tried to silence them, but in vain. The wild cries of the Sikhs and the hurrahs of the English, mingled with the bellowing of guns, the rattle of musketry, the groans of the wounded, and the tramp of men, made that night for ever memorable to all who survived its prolonged anxieties and accumulated hardships.*

Himself faring no better than the meanest soldier, Sir Henry Hardinge moved about from one English regiment or battery to another, dropping always a few cheery words as he passed along, and now and then lying down beside each regiment to snatch a few minutes of much-needed rest. "And sure he talked to us as to ladies in a drawing-room, so quiet and polite," more than one soldier was afterwards heard to say. Some of his officers raised the question of a retreat on Firózpur. But all such timid counsels Sir Henry spurned as vigorously as the fiery-hearted Gough himself. Going among his men he exhorted them to fight it out next day and beat the enemy, or die like heroes on the field.† Both he and Gough knew well that a retreat at such a moment might raise all Upper India in arms against the British

Sikh camp over every obstacle, and reappeared at the other side with a loss of sixty killed and about ninety wounded.

* Cunningham; Lawrence; Trotter; "History of the Bengal European Regiment," by Lt.-Col. P. R. Innes.

† Lawrence.

power. In Indian wars it is by following Danton's maxim that but greatest victories have been won.*

At last the long night came to an end. In the growing daylight the two Generals formed up their shattered troops for the work that still lay before them. The divisions of Smith and Littler were summoned in hot haste from their camping-grounds in the rear. Before sunrise the line advanced in échelon of regiments, with the horse artillery on either flank. Under a cannonade which dismounted several of our guns it swept onward, drove the enemy out of the village of Firózpur, and then, wheeling leftward, cleared the whole of the intrenched camp. 'Masters of the whole position, of many Khálsa standards, and of seventy-three guns, the line halted even as on parade, and regiment after regiment greeted with loyal cheers their two noble leaders as they rode along their front. By this time the rear divisions had fallen into line, and the Sikh army was in full retreat towards the Satlaj.

But all danger had not yet passed away. While the famished victors were engaged in collecting their dead and wounded, large bodies of Sikh horse bore down upon them, covering the advance of a fresh army 20,000 strong with sixty guns, led by Tej Singh himself.

At that moment a resolute commander might have snatched the victory from troops worn out with long fasting and sheer want of rest. Our guns had nearly fired their last shot. Some of the cavalry and horse artillery had just been ordered off, without Gough's sanction, towards Firózpur. But Tej Singh only knew that a Sikh army had been driven out of their intrenchments with heavy slaughter and the loss of nearly all their guns, and he had no heart for a fresh grapple with a foe of whose real weakness he had no suspicion. But the British commanders saw their danger and prepared to meet it as they best could. Finding his own guns useless against the Sikh cannonade, Sir Hugh Gough moved his remaining cavalry forward from both flanks and formed up his wearied infantry for one more desperate charge. But the Sikh commander, perhaps mistaking the movement on Firózpur for an attempt at turning his left flank, suddenly withdrew his force from the field; and once more our fainting soldiers were free to look around them and count up the cost of their hard-won successes.

* "De l'audace, encore de l'audace, toujours de l'audace."

Hard-won indeed they were. If the enemy, in Gough's own words, had suffered "an awful carnage," the loss on our side was heavy almost beyond precedent in our Indian wars. It amounted in all to 2,415, of whom 694 were slain. And it fell most heavily on our own countrymen, who certainly bore the full brunt of the fight. In Gilbert's brigades, for instance, by far the worst sufferers were the 29th Foot, who lost 70 killed to 118 wounded, and the 1st Europeans, who counted 47 killed to 157 wounded. Still heavier was the loss sustained by the gallant 9th Foot.* Out of twelve officers on his own staff the Governor-General lost five killed and as many wounded. Among the 56 officers slain were D'Arcy Todd, erewhile Minister at Herát, the fiery Broadfoot, and the chivalrous Major Fitzroy Somerset, Sir H. Hardinge's military secretary, who had borne himself, wrote his sorrowing chief, "with the hereditary courage of his race." Not less conspicuous for his bravery was Prince Waldemar of Prussia, who, with his staff of Prussian noblemen, rode through the thick of the fight beside his admiring companion, Sir H. Hardinge.†

When the tidings of this great if hard-won victory found their way to the chief towns and stations of British India, it seemed as if a dark cloud had been rolled away from the political horizon. Men's minds began once more to throw off the deadening pressure of prolonged anxiety, enhanced by frequent rumours of impending disaster, of ruin already encircling the British arms. Alike in native bazaars and British cantonments was it felt that the sun of our Indian Empire might still be far from its appointed setting. Yet amid their joy at such deliverance from immediate danger, many Englishmen looked upon the future, if not despairingly, with much uneasiness of mind. "Another such action will shake the empire," had Sir H. Hardinge said to Havelock on the night of the 21st December ;‡ and his words found an echo in the thoughts of his anxious countrymen. If the Sikhs had been heavily defeated and driven back across the Satlaj, what further success could their late conquerors for the present achieve? Sir Hugh Gough might hold the line of the Satlaj from Firózpur to Hariki Ghát; but to advance with his crippled regiments and guns of small calibre was still beyond his power. He must await the arrival of all the spare troops in the Upper Provinces, and of a

* They had 70 killed, 203 wounded—a heavier loss, by the way, than that recorded against the 62nd Foot.

† Trotter; Official Despatches.

‡ Marshman's "Havelock."

powerful siege train from Delhi, while a strong force from Sind moved northwards under Sir Charles Napier. So pressing, indeed, to the head of the Indian Government appeared the need of the moment, that on the 24th of January, 1846, he issued from his camp at Firozpur a general order for the raising of ten battalions of native foot and six companies of native artillery, all for service in the field, besides a large reserve of depôt troops for guard and escort duties between Ambála and Banáras.

For nearly a month the army of the Satlaj lay all but idle, awaiting those supplies of men, arms, and food, which the Governor-General, aided by a band of zealous subordinates, was straining every nerve to collect and hurry to the front. Thanks to the late victory, the general bearing of the people in the Cis-Satlaj States grew friendlier than it had been for some time past, and supplies of various kinds came pouring into the British camp. Nor did the Sikh soldiery seem at first desirous of exchanging further blows with their victorious opponents. But as the days passed on they grew bolder, and began once more to cross the Satlaj eastward of Firózpur. On the 18th of January Sir Harry Smith forced the garrison of Dharmkot, a small fort on the south side of the river, to surrender at discretion. But even then a large Sikh force, commanded by Ranjúr Singh, was threatening Lúdiána and the road to Bassián. To check this movement Sir H. Smith hastened with two brigades towards the scene of danger. On his way from Jagráon to Ludiána he found the Sikhs, about ten thousand strong, prepared to fight him at Badduwál. Edging off to his right under a damaging fire from the Sikh guns, he reached his journey's end on the 21st, with a loss of more than two hundred killed, wounded, and missing. Several English prisoners and much baggage fell into the enemy's hands, and nothing but Cureton's skilful handling of his cavalry saved the column from worse disaster.*

Emboldened by this affair, the Khálsa soldiery began to throng across the Satlaj, and to enlarge the intrenched works they had already been throwing up at Sobráon. Guláb Singh, who had hitherto shrunk from siding openly with his countrymen, now came down to Lahór at the request of a whole people, to lead the Khálsa in the next struggle with a foe no longer invincible. But the day of Sikh rejoicing was soon to pass. Strengthened by his junction with Godby's Lúdiána regiments and by fresh troops

* Cunningham.

from the main army, Sir H. Smith was erelong free to accept the challenge he had once declined. On the 28th of January he marched from Badduwál, which the Sikhs had quitted some days before, and presently came in sight of Ranjúr Singh's array, which by that time numbered 15,000 men with about sixty guns. The Sikhs had just begun their march to Jagráon when the approach of eleven thousand British troops demanded a change of plans. Facing round towards their enemy, they spread out in line of battle, their right resting on Bundri, their left on the village of Aliwál, near the Satlaj, between Sobráon and Lúdiána.

Over the wide grassy plain Smith's troops marched steadily forward in contiguous columns of brigades, the guns between each column, and the cavalry in front of either flank. As they drew nearer, the columns deployed into line, their bayonets gleaming in the clear morning sun. An attempt of the Sikhs to outflank the British right was speedily countered. At length, about ten o'clock, the enemy's guns opened furiously on our advancing line. Sir H. Smith gave the word for an attack on the left and centre of the Sikh position. The brigades of Hicks and Godby began the day's work by a successful onset against the village of Aliwál, while Cureton's cavalry dashed down upon the horsemen swarming on the Sikh left and drove them back upon their foot. Wheeler's brigade of the 50th Foot, the 48th Sepoys, and the sturdy little Gorkhas of the Sarmúr regiment, soon broke the enemy's centre. On their right, however, the Sikhs fought hard to hold their ground. But the disciplined prowess of Avitabile's troops, the steady daring of the Sikh gunners, and the strong array of Sikh horse alike failed to beat back the fiery onsets of the 16th Lancers and the resolute rush of Wilson's infantry. Thrice did a single squadron of lancers ride through the same square of Sikh infantry, while the horse-artillery dealt havoc at close quarters into masses of the routed foe. The village of Bundri was carried at the bayonet's point by the 53rd Foot. A mass of infantry made one last stand behind the village; but these, too, were hurled back by a vigorous charge of the 30th Sepoys, and their rout was completed by showers of grape and shrapnel from twelve of the British guns. At last the Sikhs fled in wild disorder towards the Satlaj, leaving behind them all their stores, guns, camp equipage, and losing more and more men as they crowded into the boats, or waded the difficult ford of a broad river.*

* Cunningham; Trotter.

Thus ended the battle of Aliwál, in which all our troops of all arms appear to have fought under a skilful leader with a courage and steadiness never surpassed. Fifty-six guns were taken, mostly in fair fight. Compared with the fierceness of the struggle our loss was small, amounting only to 151 killed, 413 wounded, and 25 missing. More than a third of the slain belonged to the 16th Lancers alone.

A victory so complete could not but tell strongly in favour of the winning side. The Mohammadans of the Cis-Satlaj border hailed with open pleasure the defeat of their late masters. No armed enemy remained in Sir H. Smith's front, or defended the various forts against which he was now free to march. Our convoys from Delhi and Meerut could take their slow way towards the frontier without fear of hindrance from the foe. Gulább Singh at once gave up all thoughts of withstanding an enemy from whose needs or good nature he might yet reap some profitable bargains for himself, at whatever cost to the Sikh State. While the brave Khálsa soldiery were making ready for one more stand on the Satlaj, he busied himself in plotting with the Indian Government against the men whose stubborn, if self-willed, zeal for their creed and country might still, for many a month, under loyal leading, have barred the road to Lahór. Once more defeated and driven across the river, the Sikh army—so it was virtually agreed —should straightway be abandoned by its nominal masters, and a way to the Sikh capital laid open to our conquering troops.*

The end foreseen by the shrewd chieftain was drawing near. All through the latter half of January, 1846, a strong Sikh force was busily intrenching itself on both sides of the Satlaj about Sobráon and Haríki, in the very face of the line held by Gough. A bridge of boats connected the two camps, and the bridge-head works grew gradually larger and stronger as the days wore on, without any seeming effort on our part to disturb the enemy. At length some thirty or thirty-five thousand fighting men, mostly of good Khálsa regiments, covered by lines of earthworks, lowest on their right where the ground was sandier, were arrayed in fighting order on the south bank of the Satlaj. Sixty-seven guns, light and heavy, were planted along the intrenchments, besides two or three hundred *zamburaks*, or camel-pieces, throwing shot from one to two pounds in weight, while on the other bank a strong battery of heavy guns threatened mischief to all assailants

* Cunningham.

of the Sikh right, and a reserve of several thousand men promised timely succour to their comrades across the bridge. Undaunted by past defeats, the high-mettled Khálsa craved nothing better than to be led once more against their mightiest foe. If too few of the Sikh leaders shared the enthusiasm, or seemed fit to guide the efforts of their men, there were some, at least, who, like the noble old Sham Singh of Attari, richly deserved to command such followers in the hour of danger.

Nor were the English backward in taking up the challenge once more given forth. As soon as Sir H. Smith's brigades and the long siege-train from Delhi came within his reach, the British General made all ready for the long-desired attack. His guns manned by nine troops of horse and eleven companies of foot artillery, being ranged crescent-wise in masses along the whole Sikh front, he began on the morning of the 10th of February, the battle which for that present decided the fate of the Sikh power. In the dusk of a hazy morning his troops, about 16,000 strong, moved forward to their allotted posts. About sunrise, when the mists were rolling away, the British guns near Little Sobráon opened a fire which soon spread along the whole line. For three hours our eighteen and twenty-four pounders poured their dreadful hail upon the foe, the scream of rockets mingling ever and again with the roar of roundshot and the rush of shells. Unscared if not unscathed, the Sikh gunners returned shot for shot, with an energy and precision that might have daunted any but British troops. Failing at length to subdue the enemy's fire, and impatient of further delay, Sir Hugh Gough fell back on the British Commander's favourite means of crushing an obstinate defence.* While the light field-pieces, under Captains Horsford and Fordyce and Colonel Lane's six-pounder troop kept gaining ground from point to point, until they were only three hundred yards from the intrenchments, two brigades of the 3rd, or Sir Robert Dick's infantry division, marched on in steady line up to the breastworks on the Sikh right. For many minutes success seemed well-nigh hopeless against the deadly fire of arms, great and small, which drove Dick's infantry back shattered, but still coherent, on their supports. They recoiled only for another and more determined grapple. Cheered by the words and the example of their bold leader, the brigades of Stacey and Wilkinson once more rushed at the opposing barriers, and soon made good their footing within the enemy's lines.

* Sir H. Hardinge readily agreed to Gough's plan of assault.—Lawrence.

Meanwhile the 1st and 2nd divisions, commanded severally by Sir H. Smith and General Gilbert, had thrown out their light companies for a feint attack on the left and centre of the Sikh position, on which our guns kept up a vigorous fire. But the temporary repulse of the 3rd division by the Sikh right caused the turning of the feint attack into a real one. Then came the sternest struggle of the day. Gilbert's brigades went boldly forward in two lines, recoiled under the crashing fire poured out from behind a triple row of breastworks, but recovering themselves as quickly, rushed on with irrepressible might, and after a fierce hand-to-hand struggle the centre of the Sikh position was also won. Nearly at the same time Smith's division succeeded, after an obstinate fight, marked by a partial failure, in carrying the trenches on the Sikh left; while Thackwell's brigades of horse shot forward from the British left to crown the success already achieved by the men of Dick's division. Once more the splendid 3rd Dragoons, led on by Sir Joseph Thackwell himself, were foremost in charging the enemy's guns, sabring the gunners, and riding over everything that stood in their way, in a style which called forth the delighted praises of the war-loving Gough himself.

Still, like men who would sell the victory as dear as possible, the brave Khálsa fought on for some time longer, yielding only step by step, and sometimes rushing sword in hand on their assailants, in the vain effort to turn back the tide of deepening disaster. Here and there some knot of fearless gunners would still serve their cherished weapons with marked effect; some body of disciplined footmen would still dare the onset that was sure to sweep them away. While Tej Singh was far off in cowardly or treacherous flight from the field, some few, at least, of his commanders remained to fight or fall like true sons of Father Govind. The noble old warrior Shám Singh, for instance, devoting himself to death like another Decius, rode conspicuous in his white garment wherever the fight was thickest, and fell at last, a martyr in no unworthy cause, upon a heap of his fallen countrymen. With a kindly respect for his heroic enemy, Sir Hugh Gough would let no one disturb the dead chieftain's followers in the search they afterwards made for his corpse.*

For nearly two hours the fight raged at close quarters within the intrenched camp. But courage of the highest order seemed vain against the stubborn discipline of our troops. The hardy

* Cunningham; Trotter; Marshman; Innes.

Gorkhas of the Sarmúr and Nasiri battalions vied in deeds of daring with the high-bred Sepoys of the Bengal Army, and their white-skinned comrades of the 10th, 29th, 31st, and 50th Foot, and the 1st European Light Infantry. Driven backward from point to point, the enemy still showed a front to the victors, never asking for quarter, but stalking slowly away or rushing singly upon a score of bayonets.* At last the wrecks of the Sikh army were in full retreat towards the river, whose waters presently grew choked with bodies and red with blood of brave men mown down in scores by the merciless fire from our six-pounders, aiming from the very brink at masses of fugitives struggling to escape by the broken bridge, or by fords which a sudden flush had rendered dangerous. By one o'clock on that afternoon not a Sikh remained in arms on the left bank of the Satlaj. Between the dreadful carnage at the close and the fierceness of the previous struggle, the Sikh loss may be reckoned at not less than 8,000, including several chiefs of note and commanders of rank, who followed the example and shared the fate of Shám Singh. Sixty-seven guns, more than 200 *zambúraks*, a great many standards, and a camp full of warlike stores, rewarded this crowning triumph of the British arms.

Nor was the loss of the victors small in a fight waged so desperately at such close quarters. Out of the 16,000 who were under fire, 320 fell dead, 2,063 wounded. Of this loss the heaviest share fell to Gilbert's division, whose returns showed 6 officers, 5 sergeants, 109 men slain; 50 officers, 46 sergeants, 2 trumpeters, 685 privates wounded. In officers alone Gough's army lost 146 wounded and 16 slain. Chief among the latter was the brave Sir Robert Dick, who fell mortally wounded in the act of showing his men the way into the Sikh entrenchments. Brigadier Taylor also fell at the head of his gallant brigade. Among the wounded were General Gilbert, Brigadiers Penny and McLaren, and Lieutenant-Colonel Gough, acting Quartermaster-General of the Queen's troops. Prince Waldemar of Prussia played no mean part in the battle, nor did a serious hurt received some days before prevent Sir Henry Hardinge himself from riding forward into the hottest of the fire, and issuing orders which helped materially to win the day.†

With the battle of Sobráon ended the campaign. Three days afterwards Gough was writing his despatches under the walls of

* Cunningham. † Lawrence.

Kassúr, whose strong fort had surrendered to his army without a blow. Thither on February 15th came Guláb Singh, with other of the Sikh chiefs, to treat with the conquerors on the one condition that a Sikh government should still be acknowledged at Lahór. They were told that the English, while allowing the independent rule of Dhulíp Singh, would keep their hold on the country between the Biyás and the Satlaj, and required a million and a half sterling towards the expenses of the war. Reluctantly the envoys agreed to terms of which they had not much reason to complain, and in a day or two came the young king himself to confirm the concessions yielded in his name. On the 17th the fortress of Philór, on the right bank of the Satlaj, opposite Lúdiána, surrendered without a shot to the troops of Brigadier Wheeler. On the 20th the main army encamped before the Sikh capital; and two days later the thoroughness of its triumph was proclaimed to the Indian world by the quartering of British regiments within the citadel of Lahór. At the same time Sir H. Hardinge showed his regard for the feelings of a conquered foe, by forbidding any of his soldiers from entering the city itself on whatever account.

CHAPTER II.

INDIA UNDER LORD HARDINGE.

On March 9, 1846, at Lahór, the English and Sikh Commissioners* set their seals to the treaty concluded between the Indian Government and the Lahór State. Most of its provisions had been foreshadowed in the conference at Kassúr. Besides renouncing all claim to the old Sikh fiefs south of the Satlaj, and to the province of Jalandhar, lying mostly between the Satlaj and the Biyás, Dhulíp Singh further agreed to surrender the whole of his rights in the hill country between the Biyás and the Indus, as an equivalent for two-thirds of the fine which he had already promised to pay. Over the greater part of the country thus surrendered, including Kashmir, the Rajah Guláb Singh was to hold independent sway "in consideration of services rendered by him to the Lahór State;" in plainer English, as an equivalent for the million sterling he had agreed to pay into the Company's Treasury on behalf of the Sikh Government. The reduction and remodelling of the Sikh army, the surrender of thirty-six more guns which had been pointed against our troops, the right of the English to regulate the tolls on the Biyás, the Satlaj, and part of the Indus, an embargo on the employment of white foreigners, British or other, without leave of the Indian Government, were among the minor articles of this treaty. By a supplementary treaty signed on March 11, it was further agreed, at the request of the Lahór Darbár, that a sufficient number of British troops should remain at Lahór till the year's end if needful, as a safeguard to the Sikh Government during the process of reorganizing the Sikh Army.

The actual extent of the country handed over to Guláb Singh was defined in a separate treaty made with that ruler. It embraced all the hill region eastward of the Indus, and westward of the Rávi, with the exception of Lahaul; a territory over the

* The English commissioners were Mr. Frederick Currie and Major Henry Lawrence.

greater part of which its new master already wielded some measure of sovereign power.* In return for the aid guaranteed him against foes from without, he bound himself to help the English at need with the whole of his own army; and to acknowledge the British supremacy by a yearly offering of one horse, "twelve perfect shawl goats of approved breed," and three pairs of Kashmir shawls.† When our new ally was formally invested at Amritsar with the title of Mahárája, he stood up, and, expressing with joined hands his gratitude to the Governor-General, declared himself to be now indeed the *zar-kharid* or gold-bought slave of his English patrons.‡

By this stroke of well-considered policy, Sir Henry Hardinge not only secured the balance of a fine which the Lahór Treasury, but a few years before so richly stocked, had no immediate means of paying in full; but attached to the British cause a shrewd, strong, ambitious, yet statesmanlike ruler, who might else have proved a dangerous foe. With an ally so capable planted in the northern provinces of the Panjáb, with the Jalandhar Doáb guarding our north-western frontier and barring the way to our hill stations, the Governor-General could afford to give the Sikhs another chance of independent rule over the large remainder of Ranjit's realms. In view of the approaching hot season, of the actual weakness of his own resources, military and financial, at that moment,§ he chose that solution of the problem which harmonized best with the promptings of a sober, upright, and merciful statesman. Even now, in the face of all that has since happened, it is hard to say what better course he might have adopted.

In order that all India might realize the greatness of our successes on the Satlaj, 250 of the captured cannon were marched down in grand parade through every station on the road from Firózpur to Calcutta. On the broad plain outside the latter place the long train of warlike trophies passed in review before the Deputy-Governor, Sir Herbert Maddock, and a large staff of Government officers, between lines of troops assembled from Fort William and Barrackpore. In England the general verdict ex-

* Lawrence. To his influence Shaikh Imam-ud-din owed the government of Kashmir.

† Parliamentary Papers.

‡ Cunningham

§ After four pitched battles, his European force was reduced to 3,000 men, and the moral tone of the native army was at that time low.—Lawrence.

pressed itself in the honours showered by a grateful country on those who had borne part in the late campaign. In some of his most eloquent speeches Sir Robert Peel called on the House of Commons to join him in solemnly thanking the brave troops who, under Sir Hugh Gough, Sir Henry Hardinge, and Sir Harry Smith, had done such glorious service against so formidable a foe. The Prime Minister's weightiest praises were pointed, not unjustly, at the Governor-General himself. In the Upper House Lord Ripon's speeches were worthily seconded by the plain but weighty utterances of the old Duke of Wellington. Close upon the unanimous vote of both Houses came that of the East India Company, while the freedom of the city was awarded in the same month of April to the Governor-General, his Commander-in-Chief, and the victor of Aliwál. The two former were presently made peers, the last named a baronet. A knighthood was duly bestowed on General Gilbert. In due time, a medal with clasps for each battle was issued to all the troops employed in the campaign. In India the Governor-General had already taken upon himself to order a donation of twelve months' batta for all who had helped to win the late victories.

The process of remodelling the Sikh army was partly carried out under Lord Hardinge's own eyes. From time to time bodies of Sikh soldiery came to Lahór to be paid up and disbanded. Sorely as they smarted under present discomfiture, these men bore themselves before their conquerors with the proud deference of a self-reliant race. They had been worsted by their masters in the art of war: they were yet but learners in a rough school, and took their beating as a matter of course. But the children of Govind by no means despaired or doubted of the future. The faith and the power of the Khálsa would yet triumph, they believed, over every hindrance; and the strangers whose superiority in arts and arms they now readily acknowledged, might yet find that in overthrowing the Mohammadan they had only smoothed the way for the final establishment of the Sikh rule.*

To the brave and competent Sir John Littler was entrusted the command of the strong British garrison quartered at Lahór. For the post of Resident at the court of the boy-king, Lord Hardinge selected Colonel Henry Lawrence, who had been lately summoned from Káthmandú to fill the place left vacant by the death of the noble Broadfoot. A happier choice for his own praiseworthy

* Cunningham; Trotter.

purposes he could not easily have made. The new Resident had already given handsome earnest of the great qualities which stamped his after career. As soldier and diplomatist in the Afghán war of 1842, he had gained distinction as well as experience by his successful management of our Sikh allies. At Káthmandú he had carefully foreborne from all rash meddling with the troubled politics of Nipál. Since his return to the Panjáb he had played a leading part in negotiating the treaty with the Lahór State. To his thorough sympathy with Lord Hardinge's views he added a force of character and a large-hearted tenderness for others' feelings, which specially entitled him to act as mediator between the Sikh leaders and the British Government. But even Lawrence could not achieve a miracle. At the head of the Sikh Regency was the Queen-Mother, a sort of Eastern Messalina; and her Vázir or Prime Minister was the graceful, well-mannered, but utterly worthless Lál Singh. Under such leaders all hope of a strong and friendly government was soon to fade from the Governor-General's heart.

One of the first questions which came up for settlement before Colonel Lawrence was the claim of the Sikh Government against Mulráj, the Dewán or governor of Multán, for the *nazarána* or succession duty which he had agreed some time before to pay. The sum demanded of him for the right of succeeding to his father's office had at first been fixed at a *krór* of rupees, or a million sterling; but the demand was afterwards lowered to eighteen lakhs, about £180,000. After beating the troops sent to enforce submission to a lawful claim, the bold Dewán appealed from his masters to the British Resident. Lawrence decided in favour of the Sikh Government. Mulráj was bidden to surrender a third of his province to Mir Bhágwán Singh. His revenue assessment for the remainder was to be raised by one-fourth. His forts were to be held by government officers. In final quittance of all demands for arrears of tribute he was to present the Lahór Government with a gift of £35,000. In token of his submission to these terms Mulráj went up to Lahór under a safe-conduct formally pledged by the British Resident. Bowing himself before the assembled Darbár, and offering the accustomed presents to the child-king and his mother, the turbulent chieftain informed her Highness that he had brought "the keys of Multán fort and his life also to lay at her feet." His excuses for his past misconduct were met by the Queen-Regent with polite assurances of her faith in the rebel's loyalty. His proffered sword and shield having then

been touched in Eastern fashion and restored to him by the same hand, he withdrew from the presence in company with Lál Singh, who, with his wonted courtliness, assured his late foe that he viewed and loved him as a brother. It may well be conceived that Mulráj rated such an assurance at a far lower value than the safe-conduct under which the meeting had taken place.*

Pending the peaceful close of this dispute, another quarrel raging in Kashmir called for the intervention of British diplomacy backed by an armed force. Not long had the fortunate Jammú Rájah been installed in his new dominion, when a rebellion, headed by Imám-ud-din, son of the late governor of Kashmir, threatened to drive him out again. Aided by many of the hill-chiefs who disliked their new ruler, or hoped to gain by throwing off an untried yoke, the rebellion grew to such a height that British aid promptly rendered seemed indispensable to put it down. A sufficient force from Littler's garrison was sent to guard Jammú, while a strong Sikh army, led by Lawrence himself and a few English officers, marched into Kashmir. Then was seen the extraordinary spectacle—to use Lawrence's own words—"of half a dozen foreigners taking up a lately subdued mutinous army through as difficult a country as there is in the world, to put the chief, formerly their commander, now in their minds a rebel, in possession of the brightest gem of their land."† Frightened by the help thus promptly given to his rival and by the seizure of all his lands in Jalandhar, the insurgent Shaikh was ere long brought to terms; and his timely surrender to Captain Herbert Edwardes on the last day of October, settled the fate of a rising in which the slippery Lál Singh was found to have played a forward part. Imam-ud-din himself, when brought to trial, produced the Vázir's written orders for what he had done.

For this crowning piece of treachery Lál Singh was not to be left unpunished. By Lord Hardinge's command a Commission of five English officers, headed by Mr. Frederick Currie, his Foreign Secretary, sat in judgement on the great criminal, in the presence of sixty-five Sikh chiefs. The charges against him being fully proved, he was deposed from his high office and carried off into British territory a prisoner, on a pension of Rs. 2,000 a month. Torn from his royal paramour, the disgraced Vázir broke forth into womanish wailings over the hard fate that doomed him, the unknown adventurer of other days, to a life of easy seclusion within the fort of Agra.‡

* Trotter; Kaye. † Lawrence's "Essays." ‡ Lawrence; Trotter; Kaye.

It had now become an urgent question how the Government of the Panjáb was to be carried on. One great experiment had dismally failed but a few months after the making of it. Another must now be tried by which Lord Hardinge still hoped to avert the collapse of native rule in the Land of the Five Rivers. The little Máhárája was only nine years old. Anxious only to "save the Ráj" from its own unruly lieges and bad or incompetent officers, Lord Hardinge invited the leading Sikh nobles to consider the terms on which he would still lend them the protection of British troops and the counsels of a British Resident. On the 16th December fifty-two Sardárs met in solemn conference, to discuss with Mr. Frederick Currie and Colonel Lawrence the several points of a new treaty designed to supersede the arrangements of the previous March. With rare unanimity the assembled chiefs agreed to substitute a Council of Regency, guided and controlled by the British Resident, for the rule of a worthless Queen-Regent, aided by a Vázir of her own choosing. The new Council, consisting of eight Sardárs, removable only at the will of the Governor-General, was to carry on the government during the minority of Dhulíp Singh, under the eyes of an English Resident whose power would extend "over every department and to any extent." It was further agreed that the Lahór Treasury should provide twenty-two lakhs a year towards the maintenance of a British garrison quartered among the chief forts and cities of the Panjáb.*

To no part of this arrangement did the Sikh chiefs agree more heartily than to the transfer of supreme power from the Queen-Regent to Colonel Lawrence. At their own request the former was removed from her high estate on a pension of a lakh and a half (£15,000) a year. With the Governor-General's sanction Lawrence became thenceforth the virtual ruler of the Panjáb, wielding in all matters of home and foreign policy powers of control and interference, even more unbounded than those which Arthur Wellesley in the first years of the century had wielded over the government of Maisúr. On the 26th of December the conclusion of this new treaty was announced by a grand salute of British guns, fired in honour of that day's meeting between the Mahárája and Lord Hardinge at Bhairowál on the Biyás a few marches from Lahór. To some of those who heard it, that salute must have sounded like the boom of minute-guns over the grave of

* Lawrence—(Lord Hardinge's "Letter to the Secret Committee").

Ranjit Singh's dynasty. With the best intentions in the world, one of India's most peaceful viceroys had gone a long way towards annexing one more independent kingdom to an empire already overgrown.

Among those who had taken part in the trial of Lál Singh was Lawrence's younger brother, John, already known as one of the ablest and most zealous officers in the Bengal Civil Service. Passing through Delhi a few weeks before the Sikh War, Lord Hardinge soon discovered the solid worth of the quiet, deep-eyed, shrewd, blunt-mannered Irish gentleman who then filled the difficult post of Magistrate and Collector in the Delhi district. When war broke out, John Lawrence set himself with unflagging zeal to the task of collecting carriage and supplies for Gough's army. To his judgement, energy, and strong personal influence with all classes of the people was largely owing the prompt despatch of those sorely-needed supplies and succours which enabled Gough to win the decisive victory of Sobráon. When the war was over, the Governor-General, mindful of the services thus rendered at a great crisis, invited John Lawrence to take administrative charge of the newly-ceded province of Jalandhar, a country peopled by warlike Sikhs and highlanders unused to civilized rule.

After an interview with Lord Hardinge at Amritsar, the new Commissioner entered upon a task in discharging which his rare experience as a settlement-officer helped to bring out his inborn capacity for ruling men. With the aid of a few English and Native subordinates he began at once to set his new province in comparative order. Land tenures were carefully investigated; the lands themselves were reassessed at rates which seemed light enough to the erewhile subjects of Ranjit Singh; payment of the land-revenue was everywhere required in money, not in kind; and all existing rights of owners or cultivators were scrupulously observed. Lawrence organized an efficient police at a moderate cost. Trade was relieved of its former fetters; roads, bridges, and other useful works were set on foot; and justice was administered cheaply and promptly to all who sought it. Crime was punished under a rough ready-made code of rules easily worked and easy to understand. Erelong the name of "Ján Lárans Sahib," became a household word among the people whom he had been so opportunely called upon to govern.*

* Trotter's "Sketch of Lord Lawrence;" Bosworth Smith's "Lord Lawrence."

The political charge of the Cis-Satlaj States devolved on Major Mackeson, whose services during the Afghán War had marked him out for preferment in a field where his special talents were sure to have free play. His success in settling complicated questions and in placing the affairs of the protected chiefs on a footing of stable order and sound fiscal progress, speedily justified his selection for a post of no common difficulty. In the Panjáb itself the new Government set to work under happy auspices. Aided by a picked staff of smart and zealous officers whose names have since become famous in Indian history: by such men as Edwardes, Nicholson, George Lawrence, Lake, Lumsden, James Abbott, and Reynell Taylor, Colonel Lawrence threw himself into the task of breathing new life into the paralyzed body of Sikh rule. Eschewing all needless interference with native rights, usages, and feelings, he strove in many ways to protect the weak against the strong, to improve the old systems of revenue and justice, to put down forced labour in the fields, to lower the assessments for land-revenue, and to encourage the peasantry in raising larger crops upon their lands. Some vigorous blows were dealt at Satti, infanticide, child-stealing, and the traffic in female slaves. Mixing freely with people of all classes, Lawrence and his English subalterns won their confidence or commanded their respect by the friendly fearlessness of their bearing, their ready patience in hearing complaints, and their upright firmness in awarding justice between man and man.*

Before the end of June, 1847, Lawrence reported that the bulk of the disbanded soldiery had returned to some peaceful calling, and that British influence was working manifest good for the cultivating classes. Within the palace, however, plots were already brewing against the public peace, even, as many thought, against the life of the British Resident. Tej Singh, the President of the Council, was picked out by the restless Queen-Mother as the scapegoat of her undying hatred towards all who had robbed her of her favoured lover and her queenly power. On the 7th of August, amidst a gathering of Sikh chiefs and English officers, he stood waiting to be invested with the rank and outward badges of a Sikh Rajah. For more than an hour he had to await in vain the wilfully delayed approach of his child-sovereign. During the investiture a Sikh priest had to mark the Rajah's forehead with the sign of his new rank, because the young king, under his

* Lawrence; Kaye.

mother's prompting, refused to perform that act of wonted courtesy with his own finger. This crowning insult brought the lady's plotting to a disastrous end. Her creatures were speedily removed from the Mahárája's person, and she herself, with Lord Hardinge's own sanction, was carried off to dwell a prisoner at large in the fort of Shaikápur, a quiet place some twenty-five miles from Lahór. That business over, Lawrence went to recruit his failing health among the fir-clad slopes of Simla, leaving his brother John to act for a few months in his stead.*

While the Bengal Sepoys were busy fighting the Sikhs on the Satlaj, a deep-laid plot against British rule was frustrated by the timely seizure of some of its chief promoters at Patna and Dánapur in the beginning of 1846.† Of the real origin of the plot nothing was ever clearly ascertained. Some ascribed it to the Court of the Great Moghal at Delhi.. Other evidence pointed to the Sikhs themselves, who would naturally seek at such a time to brew all possible mischief in the rear of their Farangi foes. In all likelihood the flame of sedition was fanned from many quarters. We only know that a good deal of money was lodged in the hands of some Patna bankers for the purpose of tampering with the loyalty of the Dánapur Sepoys, and that handsome offers were made to these latter in the name of the King of Delhi; but the men, whose comrades were bravely fighting the Khálsa, turned mostly a deaf ear to the blandishments of their disloyal countrymen in Bengal. Disclosures made by a faithful Jamadár, Moti Misr by name, to his commanding officer, Colonel Rowcroft, led to the arrest of some of the traitors and the seizure of papers implicating many more. Two of the culprits, a Jamadár and a Múnshi of the 1st Native Infantry, were tried by court-martial and doomed to death; but a lighter punishment satisfied the demands of public policy.

For want of sufficient evidence, the plotters arrested by the civil magistrate escaped the punishment due to their offence. On further inquiry it came out that the people of Patna and its neighbourhood had been fed with wild stories of a scheme concocted by the Government for suppressing the religious rites and customs alike of Mohammadans and Hindus, and forcing the people everywhere to accept the creed of their English masters. Because the Government had made some necessary changes in the

* Trotter; Kaye.

† The rich commercial city of Patna lies on the Ganges, about 400 miles from Calcutta. A few miles below it is the military station of Dánapur, or Dinapore.

old law of inheritance, had opened the public service to young men trained in Government schools, had waged war against slavery, infanticide, and Satti, and introduced a new messing system into the jails of Bengal; because the Magistrate of Patna was employed in taking a kind of census of the town population, classified according to castes and callings, the ignorant people and soldiery were taught by their Pandits and Maulvis to look upon these things as parts of a manifest design to sweep away all distinctions of caste and creed throughout India. In order to calm the native mind, a proclamation issued by the Deputy-Governor of Bengal solemnly disavowed the truth of a story so likely to "create uneasiness among the people." It was nothing but a groundless rumour, spread by wicked persons out of hatred to a Government which never had and never would interfere with the religious rites and customs of any sect whatever; all sects having equal claims to its protection, and every man being held quite free to worship God after his own fashion. Such, in brief, was the drift of a manifesto as wise in motive and true in essence as we know it to be partially false in the letter. If the English never interfered with "the religious rites and customs" of the country, why was Satti made penal, and why were Meriah sacrifices to be put down even with the sword? *

The tenderness of native feeling on points in any way touching their religion showed itself from time to time in riots like those which happened at Lahór in April, 1846, in Tinivalli during the same year, and in 1847 at Jalandhar. At Lahór a mob of angry Hindus sought, by means of brickbats and other weapons, to avenge the wounding of a cow by an English sentry, more faithful to his orders than tolerant of native usages. Thanks to the ready coolness of some English officers, especially Colonel Lawrence, the growing danger was quelled before night, the shops of the Hindus were once more opened, and a couple of Brahmans, who had helped on the riot for their own treasonable ends, were summarily doomed to death. In July of the following year the town of Jalandhar was thrown into a dangerous ferment by a like ebullition of Hindu zeal against the beef-eating Christians and Mohammadans. For the good of the latter a butcher's shop had, with the Commissioner's leave, been opened outside the city, in a spot where its presence could shock no one. The Hindu banyas, or grain-sellers, threatened to close their shops. No heed being

* Kaye; Trotter.

given to their remonstrances, they carried out the threat. A furious rabble thronged the bazaars, ill-used some troopers sent to disperse them, and even pelted John Lawrence himself. A guard of regulars turning out to attack them, the rioters broke off; but Hindu bigotry kept the grain-shops closed for several days, until the Commissioner thwarted its rancour by importing grain from elsewhere.*

A year earlier the success of missionary efforts in the Tinivalli district of the Madras Presidency had provoked a series of violent inroads by mobs of Hindu fanatics into a dozen or more villages full of native Christians, for whose plundered dwellings and outraged persons redress was sought at the hands of the Sadar Court of Madras. Amidst the conflicting statements of the two hostile parties, each loudly resenting the wrongs done by the other, the English judges decided in effect for neither. For his bold defence of the judgement passed by himself and his brother judges, Mr. Lewin incurred the grave displeasure of the Madras Government, whose treatment of him only served to strengthen the general belief in its readiness to use its powers as a missionary partisan, rather than the ruler of a non-Christian realm. Whether the Court or the missionaries were most to blame on this occasion, certain it is that the Hindus of the Southern Presidency were sorely disquieted by the spread of new influences hostile to their ancient faith. What with the aggressive zeal of many missionaries, the unseemly excesses of their proselytes, the countenance openly given to their cause by not a few of the English functionaries, there was already going abroad a mischievous, if unfounded, suspicion that the rulers, who, in their days of weakness, had carefully respected the native creeds, were now bent on waging war therewith as relentlessly as some of the Moghal emperors had done before them.†

For a dozen years past, indeed, the ideas, moral, religious, and political, of the West had been waging war, directly or indirectly, against those of the East. One by one the old barriers raised by native jealousy and English prudence were disappearing beneath the flood-tide of a reforming movement, which gathered strength for good or evil from the personal influence of its prominent leaders and the growing numbers of its friends. Sober statesmen like Bentinck and Hardinge, Bird and Lawrence, aimed their blows at social usages, which shocked their moral sense, and strove

* Trotter. † Ibid.

to combat ignorance and superstition by founding schools where the learning and science of Europe were taught by means of the English language and literature. Zealous missionaries like Dr. Duff had set up schools of their own, in which some form of Christian teaching went hand in hand with the new learning imported from the West. Here and there some government officer lent himself with more of zeal than discretion to the task of winning native converts to his own faith from the bazaars or the Sepoy lines. Able journalists wielded their pens in behalf of every scheme that tended in their eyes to enlighten the native mind, or to illustrate the blessings of a higher civilization. In many parts of India a great intellectual movement was going on among the natives themselves in aid of the efforts making by their English leaders. Schools, vernacular or English, were founded, enlarged, supported wholly or in part by native gentlemen of every creed. Young men fresh from the Government schools opened new ones for the good of their ignorant countrymen. A native prince sent in a large subscription towards the new General Library at Bombay. Native newspapers, written more or less ably, some of them in English, discussed the questions of the day with a freedom rarely marred by scurrilous or disloyal outbreaks. And, greatest effort, perhaps, of all, a number of Hindu gentlemen had begun to lighten the mental darkness spread for ages around the *Zanana*, by imparting to their wives and daughters some of that new learning which had made its way into their own minds.

From the first days after his landing in India, Lord Hardinge did his best to forward in various ways the social well-being of his great empire. On the 10th of October, 1844, he issued the memorable decree which opened the public service under due conditions of proved competence, mental and moral, to native youths educated whether in private or Government schools. Even in the case of candidates for the lowest offices, he ordered that natives who could read and write should always be preferred to those who could not. His efforts in the cause of native education were guided by a sincere belief in learning as a means of national growth, and by a prudent desire to encourage the masses in gaining the knowledge best suited to their average needs, and likeliest to benefit the public service. In warm acknowledgment of the good work then begun, the Calcutta "Bábus" called a public meeting in December, which voted an address of thanks signed by 500 native gentlemen of known worth and influence.

A little later some of these gentlemen vied with their English neighbours in subscribing towards a new Lyceum on a comprehensive scale for the advancement, moral and intellectual, of the native youth. One of the foremost patrons of this good work was the Bábu Dwarkanáth Thákur, who promised a yearly gift of three thousand rupees for three years towards the development of a native school of art.

The name of this large-hearted Hindu had for some years past stood high among our countrymen in India for enlightened patriotism, large philosophy, and varied culture. In him, the rich descendant of a family known in Calcutta at least a century before for its wealth and eminence, hopeful Englishmen had marked a fit successor to Rajah Rammohan Rai, in the work of imbuing the Hindu mind with the religion and the learning of modern Europe. Born in 1795, and brought up in the straitest Hinduism, he delighted from his boyhood in the company of his English neighbours, to whose tastes and ways of thinking he learned in great measure to assimilate his own. Without forfeiting the rights of a high-caste Brahman, he could eat forbidden food at an Englishman's table, and avow opinions essentially at one with the doctrines of the purest Deism. As a Vedantist or believer in the inner teaching of the Hindu Vedas, he helped to found that new school of philosophy which engrafted on the old Vedic precepts all that seemed good in modern science and modern Christianity. His active shrewdness in matters of trade and business enlarged the fortune which his princely charities kept continually cutting down. Ten thousand pounds given in one sum to a society for relieving the blind and needy formed but a fraction of the alms for which his countrymen have cause to bless his memory. No scheme for the good of his fellow-citizens missed the help of his personal influence or his purse. The Government, which for some years he served officially in the salt department, gladly acknowledged the public spirit shown by him on many occasions, especially in his zeal for the suppression of Satti. In 1845 Dwarkanáth Thákur paid his second and last visit to England in company with several native youths, who were to fit themselves at his expense by a course of training at the London University for diffusing a sounder knowledge of medicine among their countrymen at home.

That visit was cut short in its second year by the fatal after-fruits of a former illness. On the first day of August, 1846, the noble Bábu died in London, and a number of English gentlemen,

some of high standing in the Company's service, followed him to his grave in Kensal Green. In Calcutta, the sorrow aroused by the news of his untimely death displayed itself in a meeting held at the Town Hall, with Sir John Grant for chairman, surrounded by English and native gentlemen, all eager alike to pay worthy tribute to the memory of their fellow-townsman. In furtherance of his unfinished labours, they agreed to subscribe to a "Dwarkanáth Endowment Fund," for enabling a given number of Indian youths to master the higher learning taught in the London University.*

The reforming spirit was already making slow but sure way among the educated classes in British India. In the Government and mission schools of the three capitals and of many a large provincial town, the children of Hindu parents were gradually imbibing the thoughts while they mastered the language of Shakspeare and Bacon, were led on by the study of Western science towards conclusions fatal to the religious and scientific claims of the ancient Hinduism. In Madras a movement had been set on foot to found some scholarships at the University in honour of Lord Elphinstone, the late Governor of that Presidency. At Calcutta the rich Bábu, Mathi Lal Síl, a worthy rival of Dwarkanáth, had lately promised ten thousand rupees to any Hindu who, in the teeth of immemorial custom, should dare to marry a widow of his own faith. Finding that no one, however poor, would come forward to claim such a prize, the Bábu, at a meeting of his fellow-citizens, called for their signatures to a petition, praying the Government to remove all legal hindrances to the marriage of Hindu widows. But the assembly, prompted by their priestly counsellors, the bench of Pandits, turned an adverse, if not a scornful, ear to the speaker's pleading; and some of them were heard to say that the only petition they would care to sign would be one for allowing widows to burn themselves as freely as they had done before Lord Bentinck's day. A few, however, of the less bigoted Pandits presently joined a party of bold Bengáli youths in a league for promoting the remarriage of Hindu widows, whose dreary lives, dragged out in utter self-abasement, too often in enforced poverty and undeserved neglect, recalled the penances without the consolations of a Christian nunnery.

The question of an university empowered to grant degrees in all branches of learning, art, and science, had already enlisted strong support from the wealthier and more enlightened citizens of

* Trotter.

Calcutta. After a few years the movement fructified into an embodied fact. Another question to which the Governor-General gave his mind was the duty of shielding native converts to Christianity from the penalties imposed on them by the old laws of their own country. A Hindu, for instance, who had forsaken his father's faith could not inherit his father's property without performing the funeral rites of a religion which he had disowned. If he shrunk from acting a lie, he incurred the forfeiture of all his worldly goods. Lord Bentinck had done something for his protection, and Lord Hardinge went a little further on the same road. Into a measure dealing with the alien laws of India he introduced some clauses by which Hindus and Mohammadans who forsook their former creeds, or otherwise incurred the pains of social outlawry, might claim protection from the State in all rights and properties enjoyed by them as subjects of the Company.*

Meanwhile English influence in the cause of humanity was bearing good fruit in several of the Native States. In 1847 Satti and slavery were alike forbidden throughout the dominions of the young Sindia. The Nizam also issued an edict against widow-burning.† The Jaipur Council having lately done the same thing, now proclaimed war against infanticide; and strove to put down that dreadful custom by curtailing the heavy marriage fees, the fear of which had helped to make girl-murder common amongst a proud Hindu people who had been taught to look on celibacy as a disgrace. The stealing and selling of children as slaves or prostitutes was another practice against which the Jaipur reformers resolutely set their faces. Burning and burying alive were forbidden throughout Jhaláwar. Even in matters of less seeming importance or of more doubtful wisdom, English influence sometimes had its way. At the instance of the British Resident the Lahór Regency agreed to hold no Darbárs or councils on a Sunday, and ordered that on that day no one should be employed on the public works. In yielding thus far to English prejudices the Sikh statesmen doubtless took their cue from the Governor-General himself, who in 1846 had formally forbidden all Sunday labour in the public offices of Bengal.

In Kashmir Guláb Singh was earning the goodwill of his English Overlord by governing his people in fair accordance with

* Trotter.

† At the death of the Rajah of Mandi, a small state near Simla, a dozen women had been burnt alive, and twice as many were burnt with the body of the murdered Sikh, Rajah Hira Singh (Lawrence).

English ideas. He proclaimed freedom of worship throughout his realm, made Satti, slavery, and infanticide penal, and showed himself on the whole a strong, yet merciful and wise ruler. But among the native princes of the day few, if any, equalled the Rajah of Travancore in all those qualities that go to the making of a good ruler and an accomplished gentleman. His zealous pursuit of knowledge, his steady patronage of modern science and English letters, his administrative talents, and his lofty patriotism combined to render his death, which happened in 1846, a misfortune for his subjects and a source of regret to all those Englishmen who had known him personally or followed his efforts for the public weal.*

For some ten years past the campaign against human sacrifices had been going on with varying fortune amidst the densely wooded hills and fruitful valleys of Gúmsar and Bódh, south of the Mahánaddi, the great river of Orissa. One of the customs most fondly cherished by the various Khánd tribes that peopled this secluded region was the offering of human victims, or *Meriahs*, to their Earth-Goddess, without whose favour, thus purchased, their fields would be tilled in vain. These Meriahs were bought or stolen young and reared up carefully in the Khánd villages for the slaughter which in due time they would have to undergo. On the day fixed for sacrifice the victim was bound to a stake, a priest dealt him a slight wound with his axe, and then the crowd who had waited for that signal, rushed with their knives upon the helpless youth or maid, and cut off each his slice of living flesh. These slices were afterwards shared among the heads of families, each of whom duly buried his bit of flesh in one of his own fields, happy in the belief that he had thus sown the sure seed of a plentiful harvest.†

It was ascertained that twenty-five Meriahs had sometimes been sacrificed at a single festival, while several hundred were always awaiting the same doom. In default of purchased victims one man was known to have delivered two of his own daughters into the hands of the sacrificing priest; and in some districts those who had failed to get other victims would bring their old and helpless parents to the stake. To tolerate cruelties like these on any plea of religious usage in a country ruled by Englishmen became impossible as soon as the truth about them became clearly known. The duty of weaning these savage Khánds from practices not un-

* Trotter. † Campbell's "Adventures among the Khonds."

known to our British and Teutonic forefathers devolved at first on a Madras officer, Major Campbell, and four years later, when ill-health drove him away, on Major Macpherson. By dint of appeals to the fears or the reason of Khánd chiefs and elders both these officers succeeded in rescuing hundreds of Meriahs from a cruel death. At Lord Hardinge's own suggestion six English and thrice as many native assistants were sent to aid Macpherson in the attempt to civilize a rude people scattered over an area of 6,000 square miles. But their very zeal in carrying out the Government's orders provoked resistance among the younger and bolder leaders of the Khánd tribes. In the spring of 1846 Macpherson suddenly saw his camp surrounded by an armed mob, whose threats or promises led him to yield back the hundred and seventy Meriahs whom but a week ago the chiefs of Bódh had given up into his charge. On his retreat towards Gúmsar the rebels waylaid the British Agent and forced him to surrender their Rajah, who happened to be staying in the British camp. About the same time a body of Khánds, armed with matchlocks, bows, and axes, fled, after a short struggle, from a party of Madras Sepoys sent out in quest of some refractory chiefs.*

After the rainy season the flame of revolt broke out again in Bódh. Erelong it spread over the neighbouring highlands of Gúmsar, whose people rallied to the side of Chokro Bissoi, nephew of the exiled chief Sám Bissoi, who had failed to clear himself from the charge of plotting against the English. A fitful warfare flared and flickered all through the following year. Safe in the shelter of their wood-covered hills, Chokro's followers cared but little for the burning of their empty villages in the plains, or for the efforts made to reach them by troops to whom a prolonged sojourn in those fever-teeming jungles would have been certain death. Over a large part of the Gúmsar country order was at length restored by the fear-compelling movements of General Dyce and the reappearance of Colonel Campbell on the scene of his former services. Sám Bissoi once recalled from exile, the new Agent had not much trouble in allaying the fears still felt by the people touching the designs of a Government whose troops seemed never to have done marching to and fro in Gúmsar, and whose native underlings were said to have often abused their powers.†

* Lawrence; Campbell.

† Macpherson and his assistants had been summarily removed from their posts on the charge of provoking rebellion by their own acts. On further inquiry, conducted by Mr. John Grant under Lord Dalhousie, the charges were held to be

The Gúmsar rebels promised gladly to abstain from human sacrifices; but it was hard, they pleaded, that a custom put down in their country should still be virtually allowed in Bódh and Jaipur.

In spite of his uncle's restoration Chokro Bissoi still held out in Bódh in concert with his ally, the Rajah of Angúl. In the first days of 1848, Campbell led against the latter a brigade of Sepoys with four guns. The main hindrance to his success lay in the nature of the country through which he had to force his way. Within two months his errand was accomplished. The rebels everywhere yielded their stockades at the first shot; and the refractory rajah was led off a prisoner to Katták, where he lived a few years longer on a pension granted by the Government whose wrath he had so unwisely braved.

Meanwhile Chokro Bissoi still sought to stir up fresh revolts in Bódh, by promising the Khánds unlimited freedom of human sacrifices if they would but hold out against their tyrannical masters. But the fear of British power told heavily against the pleadings alike of old traditions and personal reverence for native dynasties. Colonel Campbell lost no time in deepening the impression thus made. Keeping his coercive means just visible in the background, he won from the Bódh chiefs a fair hearing of all he had to say in favour of full submission to his demands. They listened to his pleadings with grave interest, smoked and chatted with him freely at all hours, made him go again and again over all the arguments he had brought to bear upon them. Like men in more civilized lands, they tried all manner of arts to shirk the inevitable issues of all that talk. Erelong the deserted villages were getting peopled again. Refractory chiefs began dropping into the Agent's camp and taking their places in the general council of the tribes. Others still disaffected were quietly followed up, surrounded, and forced to yield. If the younger men of the tribes were still loud for resistance, their cooler-headed chiefs and elders fell more and more readily into the Agent's way of thinking. Before the beginning of the deadly month of May, 1848, Chokro Bissoi had been hunted out of Bódh, each of the Bódh chiefs had solemnly sworn to abstain thenceforth from human sacrifices, and two hundred and thirty-five Meriahs, including all but three of those formerly wrested from Major Macpherson, had been delivered up once for all into British keeping.*

groundless, and Lord Dalhousie did his best to compensate Major Macpherson for past injustice.

* Campbell.

The suppression of piracy in Eastern waters was another of the tasks which devolved upon Lord Hardinge's government. The same plague which Lord Minto had put down with a strong hand thirty years before in the Arabian Sea, had since broken out with fresh virulence among the Malay tribes of the Indian Archipelago. Chief among the savages who sallied out for deeds of blood and outrage from the shores of that sea were certain Dayak tribes of Borneo, whose strongholds lay up the Linga and Sakarran rivers. Against these, in 1844, Captain Scott of the Indian, and Captain Keppel of the Queen's Navy, carried out a successful cruise, marked by the slaughter of many Dayaks and by the capture of all their praas or war-galleys. For several years following the same punishment had to be inflicted on other bands of pirates in the same seas. In the course of this warfare many captives were rescued from slavery or a cruel death, and many tribes which had lived by preying on their fellow-men learned a lesson of wholesome respect for the power whose arm could reach them in their remotest haunts.*

Before the close of 1847 Sir Charles Napier had made over the government of Sind to Mr. Pringle, who was to rule that province as Commissioner under the Government of Bombay. During the dreadful sickness which in 1843 had turned his strongest regiments into mere skeletons, Napier had much ado to maintain a show of strong government amidst a newly-conquered people. But his administrative talents, aided by a small but select staff of officers, had worked hand in hand with his military resources to bear him safe through a trying ordeal. In the second year of his rule his strong personal ascendency displayed itself at a great gathering of chiefs with their followers, whom he had summoned to meet him on the Queen's birthday near Haidarabád. With the leaders of this array, which numbered 15,000 armed men, their new Governor held peaceful conference, receiving anew their formal homage, listening patiently to all complaints, and offering them every assurance of his own goodwill, so long as they too forbore from troubling their new masters.

In the beginning of 1845 Napier led a force of five thousand men into the hill-country ruled by the Khán of Kalát, who had given him leave to go and punish some robber tribes guilty of repeated raids into Sind. Setting their own Khán at defiance, and spurred on by one of the fugitive Amirs, these "Pindáris of

* Trotter.

the Indus" felt safe from all attack amidst the rugged steeps and wild passes of the Trakhi and Búghti Hills that frowned down upon the plains of Kachhi. But they had reckoned without their bold pursuer, whose eager spirit found itself reflected in his troops. Two months' incessant marching through a dreary wilderness in chase of an ever-flying foe taxed the endurance of all concerned. Napier's light horsemen succeeded in surprising several of the robber bands in their own encampments, taking many prisoners after a short but fierce fight. At other times the prisoners taken were chiefly of the four-footed kind; and the number of camels, oxen, sheep, and goats which fell into the victors' hands helped to bring the struggle to an early close. Day by day the robbers found themselves more and more closely hemmed in. In vain did Bija Khán, their leader, seek to escape from the snares of so keen a huntsman as Sir C. Napier. Just as the troops were making ready to storm his last stronghold, he had the wisdom to surrender it on the only terms then open to him, his conqueror's mercy. By this time all the Bilúchi leaders save one, with their families, their goods, and many of their followers, had fallen into Napier's hands, and the lesson thus read to these robbers they were not likely soon to forget.*

From that time forth the peace of Sind was broken only by two or three border raids, for which due punishment was promptly exacted. In the early part of 1847 Sher Mohammad, the long-hunted "Lion of Mirpúr," yielded at last to the fate which had overtaken all his fellow Amirs. Throwing himself into the hands of Colonel Lawrence, he withdrew into peaceful privacy on the pension granted to other State-prisoners of his rank. His old chief, Mir Rustam Khán, the exiled prince of Khairpúr, had died the year before at Púna, hoping to the last in vain for some redress of the wrongs sustained by himself and his brother princes at our hands. The appeal which their Vakíls or envoys had already laid before the Court of Directors and the English Government met with the usual fate of such attempts to undo the accomplished fact. It is nearly as hard for a government to surrender its ill-gotten gains as for a python to disgorge his half-swallowed victim. If Englishmen privately regretted the injustice done to the Sind Amirs, they were generally far from loath to stand upon the advantage thereby won for themselves or their new subjects; to let bygones be bygones, and keep the command of the Lower Indus

* Trotter.

thenceforth in English hands for the ultimate good, they hoped, of the annexed province.

Napier, at any rate, did his best to govern justly the people entrusted to his care. With all the heavy work that passed daily through his hands, it is greatly to his credit that so much of it was done so ably in so short a time. The people of Sind were relieved of no small part of their old fiscal burdens; the power of life and death passed away from the hands of the great landlords into those of a few English Commissioners, checked by the final vote of the Governor himself; slavery, torture, the right of murdering kinswomen, were all done away; and a kind of rough-and-ready justice was brought home to every door. The very robbers who had just been leading him so wild a dance were soon enlisting by scores into his new police. The revenue sufficed for all civil purposes; and, in short, but for a few acts of doubtful justice and for the check given to inland trade by a system of transit duties less sound in principle than consonant with native usage, there was little to blame in Napier's management of a province in which everything had to be ordered anew by a single governor, with the help of a few English subalterns.

His retirement was hailed with different feelings by different classes of his countrymen in India. To the officers and soldiers under his command he had endeared himself by most of the qualities which make at once a good general and a thorough soldier. Wherever he led them his troops were eager to follow, proud of serving under so skilled a master, happy to fight or suffer hardship beside one whose example spurred them on to the highest pitch alike of daring and endurance. Others, who knew him mainly for his readiness with tongue and pen, might feel an amused regret at losing an eccentric, if hot-headed speaker, a writer whose general orders were unmatched for their racy English, their homely, hard-hitting humour. Others again, of various classes, would remember him only as the slanderer of Colonel Outram, of the Anglo-Indian press, of the civil service at large, as a rough-tongued partisan, an overweening boaster, and above all as the reckless helpmate of an ambitious Viceroy in a scheme of conquest which very few out of his own family had the courage to defend. Yet, with all his faults, his excesses and shortcomings, there was no denying his excellence as a soldier, or his marked success as a statesman set to govern a newly-conquered realm, to bring under one rule the whilom subjects of many different masters, to establish peace, order, uniform law among races either new to any

legislative curb, or else sore with natural resentment of the wrongs done to their hereditary rulers. To other tokens of that success may be added the testimony borne in public by Lord Hardinge himself to "the just, firm, and able manner in which his Excellency has conducted the civil administration of the province entrusted to his charge."

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD ORDER AND THE NEW.

Conspicuous among the victims to an outbreak of cholera, which ravaged many parts of Western India in 1845, was Colonel Henry Robertson of the Bombay Army, one of those soldier-statesmen who fill so prominent a place in the records of the Company's service. No small part of his long Indian career had been spent in the civil government of the Marátha provinces annexed to Bombay after the war of 1818. During a sojourn of sixteen years among the people entrusted to his charge, Robertson had won so strong a hold upon their hearts that when, in 1843, he came once more to Púna on his way home, natives of all ranks and creeds thronged his doors hour after hour for several days to get one more look or word from their old friend and "father." He had not long returned to India with recruited health and fair prospects of further usefulness, when the cruel disease which slew so many of those attacked by it carried him off.

To the same class of Anglo-Indian worthies, the men whose strong personal sway has done so much for the maintenance of our Indian empire, belonged Colonel John Sutherland, of the 2nd Bombay Cavalry. When Mountstuart Elphinstone was Governor of Bombay, Sutherland served on his personal staff. We next see him learning the duties of a political officer. In 1833 he became private secretary to Sir Charles Metcalfe, then Deputy-Governor of the North-Western Provinces. A few years later his commanding merits had won him the post of Political Agent for Rájputána, that great cluster of Native States which stretches westward from the Jumna to the borders of Sind. A clear head, a large heart, a masterful will, the sweet courtesy of his manner, the spotless purity of his life, conspired with his love of hard work and his taste for all manly sports to ensure him a lasting hold on the respect, the affection, the co-operative aid of those Indian princes, nobles, and statesmen among whom his work was for many years carried on. In his efforts to advance the general

welfare of these old Rájput States he never ceased to consult the ...stes or prejudices, to respect the independence of their high-born ...lers. Without bullying, yet without trickery, he persuaded ...m to reform many of their cherished laws and customs on the ...s marked out for them by their English neighbours. His ...rt of delegates from the different States smoothed the way for ...e settlement of many questions bearing on the general good. ...e lived to see Satti, infanticide, the selling of children for ...laves, and other like remnants of olden barbarism condemned by ...common agreement of the Rájput nobles. Yet in warring against ...evil he never overlooked the good that grew up with it, or out of which it sprang. In the building up of a better polity he took care to retain as much of the old foundations, to work up as much of the old materials as his natural good sense and ripe acquaintance with native usages might seem to recommend. His almsdeeds were great and many, one medical college in particular having owed its birth in no small measure to Colonel Sutherland's private purse. In 1843 ill-health resulting from a sunstroke drove him for a two years' furlough to the Cape: yet even there his active mind, always greedy after new knowledge, amused itself in discussing the character, condition, and right treatment of the Kaffir, Bushman, and Hottentot tribes by the light of his old experiences among the Bhíls of Central India. His views on these points were expressed in an able memoir written for the special use of the English Government. Another memoir, yet richer in the fruits of special knowledge and careful study, on the political relations of the North-Western States of India with each other and with the British power, his untimely death at Bhartpur in 1848 alone prevented him from working thoroughly out.*

Among the native gentry of this period Dwárkanáth Thákur did not stand alone for deeds of large charity, or of public usefulness. In 1845 the thriving city of Bombay saw the completion of a new hospital, built at the sole cost of Sir Jamsatji Jijibhai, the rich Parsi gentleman whose princely charities and fine patriotism had already won him an English knighthood. Another great boon conferred by the Parsi knight and his noble lady on their fellow-subjects was the new causeway bridging over the creek between Máhim and Bandora, a work involving a large outlay, of which the Bombay Government defrayed but a mere fraction. In the same year large tracts of land in Lower Bengal were buried

* Trotter.

deep in the floods caused by unusually heavy rains. For som
weeks the country was like a sea, and a succession of high tid
in August had threatened to overwhelm Calcutta itself. T
consequent suffering among the poorer classes was great a
widespread. Crowds of starving wretches thronged the roads
Calcutta. Many a native woman who had never before ventu
outside her own village might be seen offering her last trinkets
the wayside in exchange for food. Among the citizens of Calcut
and the neighbouring gentry not a few came forward to aid th
Government in relieving the general distress. Foremost in the
good work was the large-hearted Rajah of Bardwán. In the
district from which he took his title the floods had swept every-
thing clean before them, wrecking the villages and destroying the
means of sustenance for man and beast. At his own cost the
Rajah kept some fifty thousand sufferers with their cattle alive
for five days, until the floods began to abate.*

During these years quiet reigned in most parts of British India.
While Nipál, Afghánistán, the Panjáb were seething with chronic
unrest, while Oudh and the Nizám's country were suffering from
the usual curses of a decaying tyranny, the great bulk of our Indian
subjects were following their wonted pursuits with their wonted un-
concern for events or persons outside their daily experience. So long
as the great Company let them live in peace and enjoy a modest
share of bodily and domestic comfort, they had no very lively hank-
erings after a change of rulers which might only end in the change
from a lighter to a heavier yoke. The average peasant, whose
wants were very few, and whose chief enjoyment was a pull at his
hubble-bubble, cared for little beyond the right to till his fields
and gather in his crops at a price, in the shape of rent, which
enabled him in good seasons to pay off part of his debt to the
village usurer. The artisans and shopkeepers plied their several
callings in peace and general contentment under a rule which
taxed hardly anything but their salt, and which strove honestly
to put down all forms of robbery and violence. Merchants and
bankers had little cause to complain of a Government which
aimed at removing all hindrances to honest trade and raised no
part of its revenue at their especial cost.

It was only under new or increased taxation that the people
anywhere turned restive. At Surát for instance, in 1844, the
popular murmuring against an increase of the tax on salt ex-

* Trotter.

ploded in a serious riot which the troops on the spot succeeded for the moment in putting down. Fresh troops were ordered hither from other stations; but meanwhile peace had been preserved by the promptness of Sir Robert Arbuthnot, the Collector of that district, in delaying the enforcement of the dreaded impost nding a reference to Bombay. In a like spirit Sir George rthur, Governor of Bombay, referred this question with that of wn-dues to the Supreme Government. Lord Hardinge's answer ielded most of the points at issue. The increased tax on salt was to be lowered by one-half, and all town-duties were to be done away from the 1st of October. A few weeks later the Governor-General went still further in the path of fiscal reform, by decreeing a large reduction in the import duties on foreign salt. This measure, carried out on the lines laid down by Wilberforce Bird, involved a probable loss of twelve lakhs to the revenue at a time of some financial stress. But Lord Hardinge and his Council had the wisdom to brave a doubtful risk for the sake of lightening an impost which tended to hinder the free consumption of pure salt by the poorer millions. In the following year the tradesmen of Bombay city raised their voices in angry protest against the new shop-tax ordered by their Government. But the only answer evoked by their outcries was a promise that the tax should be levied with perfect fairness and with a due regard to all claims for special relief.*

For the trading and the artisan classes new fields of enterprise and employment kept turning up from time to time. In 1845, three years after the first steam company in Western India had been started by native merchants, a new line of steamers began to ply between Bombay and Gujarát. About the same time the citizens of Surát formed a company for making paper with European machinery. A like process for improving the cotton manufactures of Gujarát was set on foot by a native gentleman, who did not see why the raw cotton of India should be worked up by Lancashire artisans. A year later the steamers of two private companies began to race up the Ganges in useful rivalry with those started a few years before by the Government. Erelong steam-power was employed in stemming the currents of the broad Indus. In the four years of Lord Hardinge's rule, the number of steam-engines set at work in collieries, paper-mills, sugar-mills, and other such undertakings multiplied nearly threefold. The coal-fields of

* Trotter; Lawrence.

Birbhúm, the indigo-factories of Tirhút, the opium-trade of Bahár, the tea-gardens of Assam, the leather-industries of Cawnpore, the sugar-works and distilleries of Shahjahánpur, the dock-yards of Bombay and Maulmain, the looms of Delhi and Kashmir, gave employment to larger and larger numbers of native workm clerks, and overseers. In the pleasant Dhún, or Valley of Dhú and about the lower slopes of the Himalayas at Kamáon, hundrc of acres were added in 1847, by order of Government, to the la already planted with the tea which some years later was to fin a steady and profitable market in the British Islands.*

Beneath all this show of popular well-doing there throbbed the fever of much social discontent. It was inevitable that a foreign rule which knew no distinctions of class or creed, before the law, which excluded all classes alike from any real share in the government of their country, and held out to native gentlemen no prospect of high command in the ranks of the native armies, would bear hard on numbers of men who under native rule would have found free scope for their ambition, their love of enterprise, or their social pride. But there was other "matter of seditions"—to use Bacon's phrase—which our rule was breeding to its own hurt. In the course of settling the land-revenue of the North-West Provinces, for example, the avowed duty of the Government to "ascertain and protect all existing rights" of high and low, too often translated itself into the duty of protecting the rights of one particular class alone. The "poor and humble villager" was pretty sure of retaining his ancestral acres on condition of paying at stated times his due share of the revenue-assessment, as settled for the term of thirty years. But "the rich and influential Tálukdár" got small protection from the new school of civil officers for any rights which, however sanctioned by long prescription or attested by a chain of credible witnesses, he might fail to establish on such evidence as alone would satisfy the civil courts.† The benefit of a doubt in his favour he seldom received. Happy was the great landlord whose title-deeds could bear the closest scrutiny of judges ready through sad experience to suspect a fraud. But few were they who could thus clearly prove their claims to the surplus rents of the villages which their fathers had held before them. Conscious of a good cause, but alive to the legal flaws in their titles, some of these Tálukdárs no doubt re-

* Trotter.

† The Tálukdár was a kind of hereditary revenue-farmer who paid the Government its share of revenue out of the rents he himself received.

sorted in native fashion to the process of forging deeds in the room of those which, through some mischance, might not be forthcoming. If the trick was discovered or suspected, no mercy was shown the offender, however fair his case stood on other grounds. The same thing would happen if the Tálukdár's title, how strong soever in itself, could be traced to some ancestor who a century or two before had won it by unfair means.

Nor were other pleas found wanting for the disendowment of Tálukdárs whose titles might seem good in law. "To oust a Tálukdár," says Kaye, "was held by some young Settlement officers to be as great an achievement as to shoot a tiger;" and the war against him was waged in good faith by men who erred only from excess of zeal in the discharge of a public duty. In their eyes the Tálukdár was a public enemy who lived by preying upon his weaker neighbours, the old village Zamindárs. Thus it happened that one after another of these landed chiefs passed under the harrow of the new settlement rules, fortunate if he received a sum of money as compensation for the loss of his rents. One of the heaviest sufferers in this way was the Rajah of Mainpuri, whose táluk or landed estate comprised 189 villages. He came of an old family conspicuous of late years for loyalty to our rule. But his enemies called him an imbecile, and charged his agents with all kinds of cruelty and oppression. The Settlement officer found some flaws in his title and reduced the number of his villages to fifty-one. The new Board of Revenue confirmed the ruling which the Commissioner, Mr. Robert Hamilton, had disallowed. On the other hand Mr. Robertson, the Lieutenant-Governor, set aside the Board's decision as unjust and hard-hearted. No clear proof, he said, either of the Rajah's mismanagement or of the ownership claimed for the Zamindárs who had paid rent to the Rajah's family for more than a century had been adduced. To deal as the Board desired with such a case on the plea of adhering to one invariable rule "would not be reconcilable with good feeling or justice."*

Robertson's order that the revenue settlement of all the villages should be made with the Rajah only was never to be carried out. The Revenue Board contrived to delay the settlement of the question until Robertson had retired from office. His successor, Sir George Clerk, who belonged to the same old school of kindly statesmanship, found himself, after a few months of office, driven

* Official papers quoted by Kaye.

by ill-health to make his way home. Before the end of 1844 he had been replaced by Mr. James Thomason, one of the ablest and most active-minded civil officers of his day. The Rajah's case, which had hung so long in the balance, now came up for settlement before a Governor who had already made his markas a leader in the new school of civil polity. Mr. Thomason at once decided against the Rajah.

The resumption of rent-free tenures, and the summary sales of landed property in payment, whether of private debts or of arrears of land revenue, were other grievances which helped to enlarge the ranks of ill-wishers to our rule in India. In every province which passed under British rule, it was found that certain portions of the land had been granted to their holders, past or present, free of all charges for land-revenue. These rent-free holdings were of various kinds, granted at different periods on different conditions, some of them for one life, others for ever. Under the native governments some of these grants were recalled or renewed on the accession of a new sovereign. But the Company's officers were at first content to treat all such tenures as sacred from the fiscal clutches of the State. It was more than thirty years after the Permanent Settlement of Bengal before the notion of attacking the immunities of the freeholders began to root itself in the official mind. In 1828, during the last weeks of Lord Amherst's rule, a special commission carried on the attack by dealing promptly with a long list of cases sent up on appeal from the district courts. Numbers of freeholders quickly found themselves reduced to the condition of rent-paying Zamindárs. In vain they pleaded the lapse of time, the rights of actual purchase, the loss of old deeds through misadventure or the ravages of white ants. The commissioners with stern impartiality condemned them all to pay rent thenceforth for their holdings on pain of losing them altogether. In course of time the same process was applied to other provinces with like results, sometimes in the teeth of evidence which it seemed impossible to impugn. Royal *firmáns* and other authentic documents became of no account. In one district of the North-West Provinces, according to Mr. Robertson, "the obligations of a treaty and the direct orders of Government were but lightly dealt with; and in all a total disregard was evinced for the acts even of such men as Warren Hastings and Lord Lake."*

There was reason, of course, at the bottom of this raid against

* Kaye.

ent-free tenures. In a country where the revenue is drawn mainly rom the land, all such exemptions from the taxpayer's common pt are obviously unfair in principle. But not less obvious was he hardship inflicted on so many families by the prolonged delay n applying a sound modern principle to a system sanctioned by ld use and wont. And the principle itself was enforced through ricky and high-handed processes, which lent a keener sting to the grievances of those who suffered for the general good.

A grievance yet more widely felt was connected with the powers of sale, entrusted by law to the civil courts. The landholder who failed to pay his revenue-assessment by a certain date, the rayat who had lost an expensive law-suit, or had run into debt with the village usurer, would find his landed property put up for sale under a decree of the district judge. It mattered little whether the claim against the defaulter were large or small, genuine or fictitious; if the Court decided against him even for a few shillings, he was liable to see the lands which his fathers might have owned for centuries sold at short notice to the highest bidder, and he might be thankful if the new landlord retained him as a yearly tenant on some part of his lost estate.* In this way a large number of estates were yearly put up for sale, and hundreds of old peasant families sank to the level of English farm-labourers, or even of French serfs in the eighteenth century. Some of the ousted peasantry took, in their despair, to highway robbery; others were fain to become lifelong bondsmen to the usurers who had sold them up; all of them helped to swell the current of disaffection which was even then flowing against our rule.

The spirit of enlightened progress which Lord Hardinge's government did so much in many ways to foster, provoked the antagonism, open or secret, of all whose pride, prejudices, or interests that spirit seemed to assail. The rival priests and officers of Brahma and Islám resented each new measure of social or civil reform as a direct attack on their own influence or on the bulwarks of the popular creeds. The zealots for either faith saw their cherished beliefs and usages doomed to crumble away and fall beneath the advancing tide of Western culture, enterprise, and impatience of Eastern ways. They saw the young men of Bombay and Calcutta already exchanging their old beliefs and customs for the vices and the varnish of a foreign civilization. In the spread of the new learning, in the encouragement openly given to Christian

* A Bengal Civilian, quoted by Kaye, declared that he had "seen estates put up for sale for four rupees."

missions, in the suppression even of slavery and Satti, in the effort made to bring old laws and customs into harmony with modern principles, they read the signs of a deliberate plot against the religions of the country, the rights and privileges of its spiritual leaders, and the immemorial sanctity of caste rules. Hindu science, learning, laws, and religion were all so mixed up and welded together, that a rent made in one part of the fabric seemed inevitably fatal to the whole. Every good thing, in short, done or attempted with the best intentions by a handful of Farangi reformers, was sure to be misunderstood or viewed with jealous misgivings by all whose spiritual training or worldly interests arrayed them on the side of things as they were.

Lord Hardinge, however, had little time, if he had even the will, to look far below the surface of passing affairs. An upright ruler and an honest Englishman, his best energies were employed on such work as came readiest to his hand, or appealed most strongly to his heart, his conscience, or his understanding. In the first weeks of his rule, at a time when the Native army was still seething with discontent, he had the courage to annul the order by which Lord W. Bentinck had abolished flogging in the Sepoy ranks. His Adjutant-General, Sir James Lumley, and many old officers of the Company's army shook their heads strongly against a measure which some deemed hazardous, others not only hazardous but retrograde and inhuman. On the other hand it was pleaded, not without reason, that no good substitute for the lash had yet been found, seeing that the number of Sepoys yearly punished under the Bentinck code had greatly increased in the past ten years, while the discipline of the army had been falling back. And strongest argument of all was the obvious injustice of exempting the native soldier from a punishment still kept in store for his British comrade. To abolish flogging altogether being beyond his power, the Governor-General decreed its reappearance in the Native army. It was a bold experiment, but the mode of applying it was defined so carefully, and its seeming cruelty reduced by so many checks, that the punishment of the lash soon became almost a dead letter.*

Lord Hardinge's care for the Sepoys, his readiness to supply their wants, and to redress their just grievances, displayed itself in many ways. In 1845 the native troops serving in Sind were granted an increase of pay at the rates already prescribed for

* Lawrence.

Arakán. In the following year the same concession was made to the British garrisons in the Panjáb. Another boon, in the shape of batting money, was bestowed on the whole of the Native army. Every Sepoy, moreover, who had a suit to plead in a civil court was allowed to put in his plaint on unstamped paper. The pension of Sepoys disabled by wounds in action was liberally increased. Nor were the wants of our own countrymen forgotten. It was Lord Hardinge who first decreed that the kit of the British soldier should be carried at the public cost. Following Lord Ellenborough's lead, he founded a hill-sanitarium for British troops at Dagsháí, and built barracks for British artillery at Sabáthu.* And without his powerful support, Colonel Lawrence would hardly have succeeded in getting opened near Kasauli that Asylum for soldiers' children which bears his name, and perpetuates the memory of his noble life.

Economy, however, had become an imperative duty after the close of the Sikh war. The problem set before the Governor-General was how best to cut down his military expenses without impairing his military strength. Early in 1847, Lord Hardinge issued an order for reducing the strength of every native regiment of foot, from 1,100 to 800 men. A corresponding reduction was ordered for the cavalry. Every soldier who came forward to take his discharge received a handsome bonus, and none was discharged against his will. A number of police battalions were disbanded and their places filled up by "irregular" corps. No officer, native or European, was shelved, but Sind was left to the care of a native garrison from Bombay, and several British regiments returned home. By these and like means Lord Hardinge reduced his fighting strength by some 50,000 men; still retaining on a peace-footing more than that number in excess of the force that garrisoned India in 1837. And in spite of all reductions he could still point to an army of 54,000 men and 240 guns, light and heavy, that kept guard over all Upper India from Meerut to the Satlaj; while his British troops, all told, were still 9,000 stronger than they had been ten years before. More than a million a year was thus saved to the Indian Treasury, without any sensible loss of military strength.†

In view of the saving thus effected and of the growing revenue derived from the provinces on the Satlaj, Lord Hardinge found himself free to prosecute some of those public works of which

* Lawrence. † Lawrence; Marshman.

India stood in sore need. Chief among these was the great Ganges Canal, a work first planned in the days of Lord Auckland, at a time when the great famine of 1837 was still fresh in men's memories. On his way up country to Simla, Lord Auckland had marked the contrast between the districts which had suffered from the famine and those watered by the canals which, dating from the old Moghal days, had passed into a mere tradition when Lord Hastings cleared them out and restored them to their former uses. Captain Cautley, of the Bengal Artillery, proposed to make a new canal which should irrigate the fertile valley of the Ganges from Hardwár to Allahabad. Lord Auckland took kindly to the scheme, and by the end of 1839 Captain Cautley was out surveying the field of his future operations, the birthplace of his ultimate renown. A few months later the results of his first survey were laid before the Court of Directors, whose hearty adoption of his plans encouraged Lord Auckland to begin working them out at once, under Cautley's management, with the aid of funds supplied from the Indian Treasury.

After Lord Auckland's retirement the works came to a full stop. Lord Ellenborough had other matters on hand, and presently it became a question whether the canals already existing had not done more harm than good. The malaria which seemed to brood over the districts surrounding Delhi and Karnál was directly traced to the canals that watered them. Karnál itself had to be abandoned as a station for the Bengal Army. Mr. Thomason, however, the new Lieutenant-Governor, had set his heart upon the completion of Cautley's undertaking, and his pleadings fell upon approving ears. Lord Hardinge appointed a committee to inquire into the causes of the Karnál and Delhi fevers, and to consider the likelihood of similar evils flowing from the completion of the Ganges Canal. The result appeared to show that, under right conditions of drainage, course, and bank levels, the new canal involved no danger to the health of the people. At last, in March, 1847, Lord Hardinge himself inspected the works at the head of the canal, and at once resolved to carry out the great project with all due despatch, at a yearly outlay of a quarter of a million.*

The idea of introducing railways into India, alike for military and commercial purposes, found in Lord Hardinge a steady and powerful advocate. As early, indeed, as 1844, some of the Bombay

* Lawrence; Trotter.

citizens began forming a company to build a railway from the Western capital across Salsette to the Thall and Bhor-Ghát roads, the great outlets for the up-country traffic in cotton and other goods. In October of the next year Mr. Chapman, as engineer for the new company, left Bombay to mark out the best line of ground for the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, and to test the difficulties of a passage over the lofty Ghâts into the rolling plains beyond. Even Madras was beginning to talk about a railway of its own. Meanwhile, thanks to Lord Hardinge's special advocacy, Mr. Macdonald Stephenson and his staff of engineers had surveyed the ground for a railway that should link the capital of Bengal with the great civil and military stations in the North-West. After much preliminary talk and careful balancing of opposite views, the main features of a practical scheme were emerging into clear outline before the close of 1846. In respect of the State's share in such undertakings, the Governor-General went far beyond his colleagues in the Council, maintaining that the help to be given should "not be limited merely to the land," in view of all the "advantages which the State would derive from rapid and daily communications between Calcutta and Delhi." And the Court of Directors entirely agreed with him. While Mr. Simms was still surveying the ground first gone over by Macdonald Stephenson, the Court were busy settling the terms on which their aid should be given to the new undertaking. As soon as half a million sterling had been paid over to the India House, they would guarantee the shareholders a fixed interest on their money for a certain number of years, would find the land required for the railway, and allow the company to import their stock and materials duty-free, on condition that the new line should be made by sections, that the railway fares should fall as the profits rose, and that the right of purchasing the line itself might be open to the Government thirty years after its commencement. A like guarantee was presently offered to the Bombay company. Some other points were reserved for future adjustment, and Lord Hardinge's stay in India was already drawing to a close. But meanwhile he had marked out the path which his great successor was to tread with freer and surer foot.*

Amidst the growth of the railway movement Lord Hardinge relaxed no effort to improve the means and modes of travel in Bengal and Upper India. Before he left India, the great Trunk

* Lawrence ; Trotter.

Road from Calcutta to Meerut was nearly completed, save for a few bridges over the great rivers; and the journey of a thousand miles by carriage to Meerut or Delhi took no longer than a fortnight, instead of a month. He gave his strenuous support to a plan of cheap uniform postage on letters and newspapers, devised by his Postmaster-General, Mr. Taylor, and sent home in 1846 to await the final orders of the India House. In the same year he helped to pass through his Council a Bill conferring municipal government on the citizens of Calcutta; a long step forward in the path of sanitary as well as civic reform. Under his auspices the trade of the country became well-nigh free, with the repeal of town and transit duties and the reduction of a double to a single customs line in the North-West Provinces. It was he, too, who mainly fostered the early tea-culture of India, by enabling Dr. Jameson to start his first plantations in the lower Himalayas. Not less worthy of remembrance was the part he bore in the progress of the Grand Trigonometrical Survey, the care he took to preserve the choicest monuments of Pathán and Moghal art,* and the help he gave Mr. Thomason towards the founding at Rurki on the Upper Ganges of a college for the training of civil engineers, native as well as English.

One of his last public acts was the visit to Lucknow of which mention has already been made. Had Wájid Ali improved the time then granted him for repentance and reform, he might have lived on for years in his own capital, playing his own music to songs of his own inditing, and amusing his leisure hours with the company of buffoons and dancing-girls. On the side of Burma nothing new had happened beyond the despatch of a friendly but fruitless mission to the court of Ava. In Nipál a bloody revolution, prompted by the Queen, had been followed by the rise to power of the young, able, and daring Jang Bahádur, whose strong hand and skilful statesmanship were to win him the respect, erelong the gratitude, of his English neighbours. Under Dost Mohammad's vigorous sway Afghánistán had ceased for a while to disturb the thoughts of English politicians. At home, Mr. James Weir Hogg, the chairman of the Company in 1847, an eloquent speaker, of ripe experience in Indian affairs, was made a baronet for his eminent services, parliamentary and other, done to the retiring Government of Sir Robert Peel.

During the year 1847 several changes besides those already

* His timely interference saved the lovely Taj-Mahál at Agra from falling into utter ruin.

named had taken place in the higher ranks of Anglo-Indian functionaries. Early in the year Sir George Pollock threw up his seat in the Supreme Council and left Calcutta for the last time, to seek in England that health which a year before he had tried in vain to recover at the Cape. His place in Council was filled up by Sir John Littler, whose services in the Sikh campaign had been followed up by his able discharge of the duties entrusted to the general commanding at Lahór. Sir George Clerk had been installed as Governor of Bombay in the room of Sir George Arthur. Before the year's end, Lord Hardinge himself was preparing to hand over the reigns of empire to his chosen successor, the Earl of Dalhousie. He was sixty years old when he landed in India. In three years and a half he had got through an amount of hard work, at an average rate of ten hours a day, such as few men of his age, even in a more congenial climate, could have borne so steadily for such a time. The rest to which he was looking forward had indeed been hardly as well as honourably earned. The last days of his rule were cheered by the hearty welcome which awaited the truant on his return to the capital he had quitted two years before. At a moment of great commercial suffering, all classes of every race combined to pay farewell tributes of respect and goodwill to the ruler who had discharged his manifold duties with noiseless zeal, impartial firmness, and wise discretion; to the statesman whose honest efforts for the moral and mental advancement of his native subjects had won him a sure place in their grateful memories; while his own countrymen honoured him as a brave, successful soldier, trusted him as an upright, painstaking public servant, liked him as a kind-mannered, frank-spoken, unassuming English gentleman.

The good Bishop of Calcutta, Daniel Wilson, offered to subscribe £200 towards a statue of the viceroy who "had crowded into one short administration all the services of the highest order, both military and civil, which have commonly been divided among several longer ones." No Governor-General, said Henry Lawrence, "ever more decidedly took his own line, and chalked out his own course, than did Lord Hardinge." At home, the Court of Directors never tired of praising his sound judgement and his zeal for the general good; while the old Duke of Wellington loved to dwell on the unselfishness of his ancient comrade, in stooping to save India, as a lieutenant acting under the orders of his own Commander-in-Chief.*

* Lawrence; Trotter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OUTBREAK AT MULTÁN.

On the 18th January, 1848, amidst a succession of farewell cheers and salutes from the shore and the shipping in the Húghli, Lord Hardinge passed down the river on his way home. His staunch friend and trusty lieutenant, Henry Lawrence, bore him company across the sea. Six days earlier, on the 12th, the guns of Fort William had announced the landing at Chandpál Ghát of Hardinge's great successor, whose name was destined to fill a foremost place in the annals of British India. In his thirty-sixth year, the youngest and ablest of Peel's colleagues in the ministry which had lately gone out of power was chosen to fill the highest post in the British Empire outside Great Britain. As President of the Board of Trade, James Andrew Ramsay, Earl of Dalhousie, had achieved a noteworthy success in dealing with the many intricate questions evolved by the new and sudden growth of railway enterprise in these islands. Of India itself he had everything still to learn, but the varied talents, the forward statesmanship, the masterful industry, the keen aptitude for business already displayed by him in a narrower sphere, gave strong assurance of his power to grapple successfully with the new work that lay before him.

For the first few months of his rule British India was almost wholly taken up with the peaceful settlement of its own domestic affairs. The new Governor-General entered on his duties during a time of deep commercial gloom. In the Presidency capitals, especially at Calcutta, rash trading, some dishonest gambling with rotten securities, a reckless rivalry in personal display, helped largely to bring about a series of trade-failures only less alarming than those of 1830. A year of special disaster to English trade at home could hardly end without seeing a heavy blow dealt at the trade of England's great dependency. The failure especially of Messrs. Cockerell, Larpent, and Co., in London, followed by the crash of the Union Bank in Calcutta, sent all the gingerbread

firms in India, and not a few houses of established fame, toppling over, one after another, in widely hurtful ruin. Other houses, more carefully managed or less dependent on the fortunes of more prominent neighbours, weathered the storm; but the mischief wrought in loss of character for many, of wealth or livelihood for thousands, of much useful working power for the community at large, was not to be soon forgotten or easily repaired. Nor could the old native faith in English honesty help receiving a hard shock from each new revelation of the blunders and misdeeds, the desperate shifts and shirkings, which had led up to the main catastrophe, the collapse of the Union Bank. Some of the first gentlemen in Calcutta, merchants, barristers, public officers of high standing, were proved to have taken part in dealings that bore a strange resemblance to vulgar swindling. It is only fair to say that the taint of immorality was hardly visible outside Bengal; in the cities of Madras and Bombay few bankruptcies of any mark, and fewer still of a dishonest tenor, were recorded at this time.*

On the 23rd of February the Marquis of Tweeddale, who had been at once Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Madras, withdrew from the scene of his labours and his religious excesses, to make room for Sir Henry Pottinger, whose successful diplomacy in China had fulfilled the promise of his earlier services in Sind. It was he who, in 1842, had concluded the treaty which, crowning Gough's victories in the Opium War, threw five Chinese ports open to British trade and transferred Hong Kong for ever into British keeping. As Governor of Hong Kong for the next two years, he had always striven to deal justly between his own countrymen and the Chinese, and had set his hand to a further treaty in which the new relations between the two countries were carefully and clearly set forth. His selection for the government of Madras was an honour done alike to Sir Henry himself and to the Company in whose service he had achieved his first distinctions. In April of the same year, 1848, a new Governor of Bombay, Lord Falkland, took the place of Sir George Clerk, whose ill-health had once more brought his official labours to an untimely close.

One of Lord Dalhousie's earliest measures betokened his kindly thoughtfulness in matters seemingly of the smallest moment. He

* Trotter. A director of the Union Bank, who was also its debtor to a large amount, was formally suspended by the Chief Justice of Bengal, Sir Lawrence Peel, from his post of Master in Equity to the Supreme Court.

ordered that henceforth every European barrack-room, library, canteen, mainguard, in the plains of India should be furnished with "punkahs," and with men to pull them, at the public cost. Not less thoughtful for a higher class of public servants was the order issued in April, under which all magistrates and other functionaries sued for acts done in discharge of public duties might, upon good reason shown for such acts, be allowed to draw on Government for the means of conducting their defence, such advances being, of course, repayable on failure to make their defence good.

But for the last flickerings of armed resistance in the Khánd jungles, affairs in Madras kept flowing with their accustomed smoothness. On the Bombay side, the chief events of the time were the death of the reigning Rajah of Satára, the discovery of coal-beds on the Narbadda, the opening of small-cause courts under the Chief Justice, Sir Erskine Perry, and the hanging at Tanna of Rágoji Bángria, leader for several years past of a large band of Marátha Dakaits, whose deeds had made them a terror to their neighbours and an endless trouble to the police. In the Panjáb a vigorous campaign had been opened against the new form of Thaggi, rife among the lawless men who haunted the country between Lahór and Ambála. Working in gangs of six or eight, these ruffians attacked small parties or single travellers in lonely places, and strangled, or otherwise slew them, for the sake usually of a few rupees. Before April some thirty of them had been hunted down, and as many more were being hotly pursued from one hiding-place to another.*

With this exception nothing for the moment seemed to ruffle the peace of the Panjáb, that peace of which Lord Hardinge could foresee no chance of an early rupture. At Lahór, Pesháwar, Atak, Bannu, Hazára, English officers were quietly drilling Sikh and Pathán regiments, giving lessons in good government to great Sikh officials, enforcing a rough-and-ready justice among rude tribes accustomed to obey no master whom they could not personally revere. Already had Colonel Henry Lawrence been the means of establishing throughout the Panjáb that very system of low uniform postage-rates for which India was still to wait a few years longer. In March the new Resident, Sir Frederic Currie, relieved John Lawrence of his temporary charge at Lahór. A frontier tribe might raid across the border, a fanatic Akáli

* Trotter.

might raise the old war-cry in vain from his tower at Amritsar,* and the restless Queen-Mother might still weave her plots in the guarded privacy of Shaikápur; but no signs of real danger had as yet become visible to English eyes.

The thunderbolt fell, as it were, out of the blue sky. When Sir F. Currie reached Lahór the Governor of Multán was already treating with the Council of Regency for the surrender of a post which, under the conditions lately imposed on him, he cared no longer to retain. He disliked, he said, the new fiscal arrangements, his health was giving way, and his life was embittered by family dissensions. Of the new Resident all he asked was a Jaigír for himself, and some guarantee against further exactions on account of the past. To a request so natural from one whose wealth provoked the suspicions or inflamed the greed of many rivals, the Resident turned a deaf ear. As for the Lahór Council, nothing would satisfy them short of an absolute surrender. At length the business seemed in a fair way for settlement. Mulráj resigned his post, apparently without conditions, and a new governor was appointed to replace him.†

In due time the Sardár Khán Singh set out for Multán in company with his political agent, Vans Agnew, of the Bengal Civil Service, one of Lawrence's chosen helpmates in the government of the Panjáb. With him marched his able young assistant, Lieutenant Anderson of the Bombay Fusiliers.‡ Five hundred men of all arms formed an escort large enough to save Mulráj's dignity, and to guard the new-comers from all ordinary risks. On the 18th of April the outgoing Dewán, or Governor of Multán, paid visits of form and business to the English officers encamped at the Idgarh, a kind of fortified mosque outside the citadel of Multán. Next morning Mulráj surrendered the fort itself into the keeping of the new Governor. Leaving two companies of Gorkhas to help in guarding the works, after a few cheering words from Vans Agnew to Mulráj's downcast soldiery, Khán Singh's party set forth on their return to camp. Beside the English agent rode Mulráj. Close by the outer gate of the fortress, Vans Agnew was suddenly wounded by a spear-thrust under the arm. Thrown

* Gauda Singh, an Akáli or Sikh fanatic, seized a building near the great tank of Amritsar, and, with the help of a few followers, held it against a whole company for three days.

† Arnold's "Dalhousie's Administration of British India."

‡ The two Englishmen proceeded most of the way by water, thus having no time to gain influence over the escort which marched by land—(Malleson).

from his rearing horse, he turned with a stick, his only weapon, upon his ruffianly assailant, who wounded him thrice with a sword before help came. Meanwhile, Mulráj himself had galloped off to his own pleasure-house, the Amkhás. Anderson also, as he rode up from behind with Khán Singh, was suddenly beset by foes, who felled him to earth with many cruel slashes. Carried all bleeding by Khán Singh's followers into the Idgarh, the wounded gentlemen hoped, with the aid of their escort, to hold that place until the succour, for which Vans Agnew wrote off at once, could come to them from Bannu and Bháwalpur.

But the treachery, or the cowardice, of their own followers speedily put all hope to flight. After many hours of suffering in mind and body, after many vain appeals to Mulráj's honour or his compassion, to the loyalty of his troops, to the greed or the gratitude of their own escort—after a day of open fighting between the guns of the Idgarh and those of the citadel, their little stronghold, deserted by the last of its faithless garrison, was forced on the evening of the 20th by a crowd of yelling savages, eager to finish the work which some of them had begun the day before. It was not much that they found to do as they thronged into the dome-roofed hall, where Anderson lay already dying, his hand pressed in a farewell grip by that of his less hurt, and so less fortunate, comrade. Up to the latter, as he sat calmly awaiting the issue, rushed a hideous, misshapen monster named Gujar Singh, waving a drawn sword and bespattering his chosen victim with the foulest abuse. "You can kill me if you like, but others will avenge my death," were Agnew's last words, as the ruffian raised his arm to strike. At the third blow his head rolled to the floor. His dying comrade was then hacked to death by half a dozen swords. Their mangled bodies were dragged outside to be hacked and mangled anew by a crowd of butchers, lashed into ever worse rage with each new deed of superfluous insult. The heads of the murdered, flung down at the feet of Mulráj, were afterwards tossed among the mob, who smeared them with gunpowder and set them on fire. Even after a late and sorry burial, their remains were twice dug up for the sake of the cloth that enwrapped them.*

What share Mulráj had taken in this sad business was never clearly ascertained. Men's hearts are seldom quite fathomable, and those of Englishmen and Asiatics look out on one another across broad gulfs of mutual misunderstanding. The monies which

* Arnold; Trotter.

Mulráj had lodged in the Amritsar treasury and at Banáras, the arrears of tribute which he had remitted to Lahór on the eve of this very outbreak, his apparent wish to be relieved from his official duties, all this seemed to bear against the notion of a plot originated or furthered by himself. John Lawrence certainly avowed his belief that, up to March of this year, Mulráj had shown no traces of a wish to recall the step he would gladly have taken some months before. In the previous December he had renewed to Lawrence himself his prayer for relief from a post which he had found too burdensome for his failing strength and his sinking spirits; on the understanding that his purpose should be kept a secret from the Lahór Council, and that only into British hands should the Multán province be made over. Unluckily, the secret, kept by Lawrence, oozed out a little later, and instead of an Englishman settling the transfer quietly with the Dewán, a Sikh Sardár came down in state from Lahór to displace a popular ruler and insult an embittered foe. In the confession of a Brahman, afterwards hanged at Lahór, not a word was uttered against Mulráj.

It appears, on the other hand, that the result of his first interview with the two English officers fanned into flame the wrath engendered by the arrival of his Sikh successor. He had parted from the former on the 18th with an angry frown because Vans Agnew had called upon him to produce his accounts, not only for the past year, as he had expected, but for the previous six years. From that time his thoughts seem to have taken a revengeful turn. On the day when the murdered officers entered the citadel, he persuaded them to dismiss a portion of their guard, although he declined to reduce the numbers of his own retinue. It seems clear at any rate that he did nothing to avert or arrest the crime which his followers carried through without punishment, but not without reward. The ruffian who murdered Agnew, the soldiers who deserted him, were decked out with rare trinkets or loaded with rupees. Neither before nor after the murders did Mulráj make one honest effort to clear himself from the guilt that was sure to fasten upon his name. His one letter of self-defence, written on the 19th, contained a needless warning to the wounded officers, and told how he had been hindered from going to see them by the threats and violence of his turbulent soldiery. Instead of going to see them, he let his own officers fasten a war-bracelet on his wrist. Next morning he moved his family and treasures into the fort and sent out manifestoes summoning the people to rise in

his defence against their foreign masters. That same evening, while Agnew's messengers were making one last appeal to his compassion, his own followers were setting out on their errand of blood.*

Whichever be the true reading of his previous conduct, there can be no doubt that Mulráj was just as answerable for the blood shed that evening as if it had been shed at his own express bidding. On the part he played in after events there is still less room for doubt. The coward, if such he had been, ripened into the leader of an armed revolt. Led by the counsels of despair and fanaticism, he openly headed the movement he had hitherto seemed to follow; sent forth his messengers through all the province to stir up Sikh, Hindu, Musalman, to a holy war against the Farangi; and while the city was yet rejoicing over the butchery of two helpless Englishmen, he and his officers were making all haste to strengthen the defences and replenish the magazines of a stronghold which Ranjit Singh had thrice attempted in vain to wrest from its Afghán master.

While these things were happening on the Chináb, Herbert Edwardes, a subaltern of the Bengal Fusiliers, was engaged in finishing the revenue settlement of Bannu, a border district beyond the Indus. A hurried note from Vans Agnew told him of his countrymen's cruel plight. Without waiting for orders from Lahór, Edwardes threw aside his work, got together as many armed men as he could at so short a notice, and, with fifteen hundred soldiers and two guns marched off across the Indus towards Multán. By the 25th he had entered Leia, the chief town of the Sind Ságar valley. Later tidings from Multán stayed his steps, and the near approach of Mulráj himself presently drove him back across the river. Erelong Colonel Cortlandt, with two thousand Patháns and six guns, was hastening to the help of his bold young comrade. After taking a fort or two and beating a rebel force by the way, Cortlandt on the 20th May joined Edwardes at a critical moment, in front of a larger army, which the two straightway attacked and routed with heavy loss. By this time Edwardes knew that his letters and those of the Resident at Lahór had met with a prompt and welcome answer from the loyal Nawáb of Bháwalpur, whose dominions bordered the Satlaj to the east and south of Multán. A strong force of his warlike Daudputras† presently crossed the river on its errand of timely succour. Relieved from further pressure on their front, and

* Trotter; Arnold; Marshman. † Literally "Sons of David."

rengthened by fresh recruits from beyond the Indus, Edwardes nd Cortlandt marched forward in the fierce June heats to join ands with their new ally. On the 18th June, at Kinairi, on the ft bank of the Chináb, some twenty miles from Multán, the lied forces, about 9,000 strong, with ten small guns, were attacked Mulráj, whose strength in men and guns equalled theirs. The ght which followed lasted from early morning till past two, going ard for a time against the allies, whose right giving way, left dwardes on the other flank exposed to alarming odds, until, at the ght moment, two fresh regiments which Cortlandt had brought ross the river, with six guns, came up and quickly turned the ale against the insurgents. Six guns and much camp-equipage ll into the victors' hands, while the vanquished fled in disorder to the walls of Multán, leaving hundreds dead or dying behind them. Three hundred, killed or wounded, was the price paid for a victory due hardly less to Edwardes's patient daring and strong personal sway than to the timely appearance of Cortlandt's guns. *But the anniversary of Waterloo*, as Edwardes wrote, was not a day on which Englishmen could be beaten; and an officer who *had fought on the Satlaj under Gough and helped to put down* rebellion in Kashmir was not likely to discredit his training in circumstances which might have proved too strong for an untried soldier.*

Still advancing, and taking more forts by the way, the allies were strengthened on the 28th by 4,000 Sikhs, whom Shaikh Imámuddin, the pardoned leader of the Kashmir rebellion, had, in token of his loyalty, brought up to their aid. In despair at his late reverses, at the growing split between Sikhs and Mohammadans which had greatly thinned his ranks of the latter, Mulráj was ready to treat with his opponents if only his life were assured him. He was bidden to yield at discretion. For a moment he seemed to acquiesce in a demand that sounded like his death-warrant. His councillors were summoned to hear his purpose. Some of his more faithful friends were bidden to celebrate beforehand the funeral rites of their doomed chief. But Maharáj Singh, the outlawed Gúru who had narrowly escaped seizure at Pathankót, had since found his way to Multán, where his holiness and fanaticism were sure to cast their spells over the minds of his impressible countrymen. Taking new heart from this man's counsels, Mulráj once more appealed to the chances of battle against the

* Edwardes's "Year on the Punjáb Frontier."

doom he had so nearly accepted. On the 1st of July he had son twelve thousand men with eleven guns drawn out for battle l Sadusain, not far from Multán, face to face with eighteen thousan of the allies under Edwardes, Cortlandt, Imámuddin, and th brave young Lake, who had just taken charge of the Daudputr After a mutual cannonade of some hours, the dashing charge one of Cortlandt's regiments, led by a bold young volunteer name Quin, settled the question against Mulráj. His troops quail before the advancing line; and the sight of their leader knock by a round shot from off his fallen elephant, turned their quailin into panic. They fled like scared sheep towards Multán, follow up close to its walls by an unsparing foe. Two of their guns we taken. Mulráj himself, recovering from the shock of his fall, h ridden off at the head of his flying troops to shut himself u within a fortress strong enough to stand a regular siege.

To Sir F. Currie it had long since become clear that the rising at Multán was only the mistimed prelude to a movement of far wider scope. From the first he had foreseen the need of prompt measures to suppress an outbreak which might else grow into a widespread revolt. In view of Sikh treachery at Multán, and of possible if not imminent danger at Lahór, he shrank indeed on second thoughts from despatching any of the troops that might be needed for the safety of his own capital. But before the end of April he had strongly urged Lord Gough to send off a sufficient force of troops and siege guns from Firózpur, which was only sixteen marches from Multán. Had his advice been followed, had he himself dared to act upon the strength of his own convictions, there might have been no second Sikh War. But Lord Gough declined at that season of the year to send his troops forward on an enterprise so dangerous to their health; Lord Dalhousie declined to differ from his Commander-in-Chief; and Sir F. Currie bowed for a time to the verdict of higher authority.

During the month of May, however, clearer tokens of the mischief brewing cropped up under the Resident's eyes. Early in the month Lahór was disquieted by evil rumours, based on the discovery of a plot in which some of the Sikh Sardárs and the ever-restless Queen-Mother were found to have taken part. Following up the clew first given by some native officers and sergeants of the 7th Irregular Horse, the Resident was enabled on the 8th of May to order the seizure of fifteen criminals, chief of whom were Ganga Rám, the Queen-Mother's *Vakil*, and one Kanh Singh, late colonel of Sikh artillery. These two were presently hanged, while

hird arch plotter saved himself from the gallows by a timely nfession. It appears that emissaries had been going about tam-ring, not always vainly, with the native troops, by whose aid the otters hoped to carry out a general massacre of British officers Lahór. Out of seven thousand Sepoys not more than twenty re found unfaithful to their salt. One member only of the hór Council, Tej Singh, stood clear of all suspicion. Of the ni's guilt there was so little doubt that, in order to keep her out temptation's way, she was carried off under a strong escort from r retreat at Shaikápur to that common goal of exiled Indian tentates, Banáras.*

Among those who from the first had called for prompt action at hazards against Mulráj was John Lawrence, the Commissioner Jalandhar, whose soldierly instincts were in warm sympathy h the bold movements of the eager and resourceful Edwardes. his warnings were disregarded, he kept at any rate a watchful eye on the dangers that might threaten his own province. Soon after the failure of the Lahór plotters a certain *Gúru* or Sikh priest, Maharáj Singh, who had gathered round him many hundreds of ill-armed but zealous followers, threatened a raid into Jalandhar from the neighbouring hill-fort of Pathánkót. Within that province were many who might have rallied round a leader of their own faith and nation. But the fords of the Biyás were closely watched by Lawrence's police, with the aid of Wheeler's Sepoys; and the insurgent bands were presently scattered by the troops of a friendly chief.† The Gúru himself got away, as we have seen, to brew more mischief elsewhere. Some of his papers, seized in Lahór, implicated several Sikhs of rank or monied influence in a plot to imprison the two Englishmen slain at Multán as the first step to a general rising of the Sikhs. At Pesháwar, where Major George Lawrence of Kábul renown kept guard over English interests, Sikh fanatics were heard denouncing the Farangis and calling upon the troops to wipe out the disgrace of Firózshahr and Sobráon. Emissaries from Multán were already at work in the Pesháwar valley, and Major Lawrence gladly availed himself of Sir F. Currie's permission to enlist a regiment of Mohammadan Patháns as a counterpoise to the Sikhs, whom he no longer trusted.‡ It was clear, indeed, that a widespread disaffection waited but the right occasion to burst forth in violent deeds.

* Arnold; Trotter.

† Malleson's "Recreations."

‡ Sir G. Lawrence's "Forty-three Years in India."

And still, both in India and at home, the cry was that everythi would be settled before the year's end, if not before the co weather.*

On the receipt of Edwardes's prayer for reinforcements after t battle of Kinairi, Sir F. Currie took counsel with Major Napier the Bengal Engineers, whose opinion that Multán could then taken with the help of an infantry brigade and thirty siege gu tallied with the Resident's own belief, and with the firm convictio of the two officers who in a few weeks had cleared the Deraját rebels and driven Mulráj back to the shelter of his own fortre If the Resident, wrote Edwardes, would only send "a few hea guns, a mortar battery, sappers and miners, with Major Nap to head them," and a few regular regiments under a you brigadier, "we shall close Mulráj's accounts in a fortnight, obviate the necessity of assembling fifty thousand men in Octob But the Resident's desire to help Edwardes in a scheme whose boldness might have insured its success, was still checked by the cooler if less convincing arguments of Lord Gough, whose steady refusal to move his troops at that season found entire support in the council room of Calcutta. The Governor-General himself was slow to realize the true meaning of events so lightly regarded by men to whose judgement and experience he might well defer. For the present, therefore, no troops were sent forward save those which the Sikh Rajah, Sher Singh, had led off from Lahór, avowedly to help in crushing the rebellion which they were really destined to reinvigorate. The Resident knew that such troops could not be trusted; but their presence at the capital was a constant danger, and the hope of sharing in the plunder of Multán might overpower their patriotic zeal.†

With the news of the victory at Sadusain, however, the Resident's mind was made up. Edwardes declared that he had got to the end of his tether, and that now was the time to strike. Without further reference to the military Chief at Simla, Sir F. Currie took upon himself to get the needful reinforcements ready for service. Lord Dalhousie acquiesced in his agent's scheme, and even Lord Gough, while holding to his former views, cheerfully applied himself to the task of strengthening the Resident's hands. About the end of July two columns of a field-force nearly seven thousand strong, a third of it English, set out from Lahór and Firózpur under the command of an able artillery officer, Major-

* Trotter. † Edwardes; Arnold; Trotter.

General Sampson Whish. The English troops, with a siege-train of thirty-four guns, made the most of their way by water, while the native troops, including the horse-artillery, marched as they best could over the sun-dried sandy plains bordering the Satlaj and the Chináb. In spite of the heat and other bugbears that haunted the official mind, neither column suffered much in health on its way down. On the 18th of August, Hervey's Lahór brigade, accompanied by Whish, came within sight of the rebellious stronghold, after routing a small body of insurgents two days before. By the 24th the whole of the field-force had taken up its ground before Multán, except the siege-guns, which only came into camp on the 4th of September. On the very next day the garrison of Multán were summoned in the Queen's name, not in that of the Lahór Council, to surrender the place on a promise of free departure for all save Mulráj himself and a few of his chief associates. After a grace of twenty-four hours, which led to nothing, some mortars already pointed were opened against the town, and the siege had fairly begun.

The summons to surrender was unhappily worded for its apparent purpose. It meant, if words mean anything, that all semblance of native rule, as re-established by Lord Hardinge, had ceased to exist; that the young heir of Ranjit Singh was no longer recognized even as titular sovereign of his father's realm. To the fiercer spirits in Multán, to Sher Singh's soldiers in our camp, to the Sikh Sardárs and people everywhere, such a summons carried with it a direct challenge to renew the struggle which had ended so disastrously in 1846.

The walls of the fort, a mile all round, about forty feet high, and thick in proportion, were strengthened by thirty towers and surrounded by a ditch twenty feet wide. Below the fort lay the walled city, whose circumference was about two miles. Two thousand picked troops garrisoned the fortress, while ten thousand more guarded the town and the entrenched works outside. Fifty-two guns defended the walls, crowned the old brick-kilns near them, or lay hidden among the trees and enclosed gardens that begirt the fort, itself standing high above the surrounding plain. The allies, in all about 28,000 strong, had taken up their ground; Whish's brigade at two miles from the eastern angle of the fort, the troops of Edwardes and Lake a little nearer to the south-east, Imám-ud-din's Kashmiris about as far to the south, and Sher Singh's Sikhs a little further to the west. It was a motley army thus brought together; but under good leading, in spite of the

advantages which time had given Mulráj, it might erelong have thoroughly discharged its errand, but for the treachery that lurked within its ranks.

On the 7th of September some of the heavy guns and mortars were planted about twelve hundred yards from the city walls. Countermanding his orders for an early assault, General Whish resolved to work his way by regular approaches. For some days his troops were engaged in digging trenches and driving the enemy from their advanced posts. In the latter attempt they were not always successful, but on the morning of the 12th a grand attack, led by Brigadier Hervey, on all the outworks in front, issued in a victory which brought our batteries within hundred yards of the beleaguered town. Heaps of slaughtered rebels filled the intrenchments which Hervey's stormers had with the loss of two hundred and eighty killed and wounded. Next day a fierce but fruitless onset was made by the enemy against Edwardes's camp. On the 14th an outwork called the Hamand Gharri was carried by the besiegers, whose batteries would now be free to fire unchecked both on fort and town. Everything looked well for a happy issue to the work so well begun. But treachery, sudden if not quite unexpected, was to wrest the prize from hands just reaching out to grasp it. The Rajah Sher Singh had been requested to take his troops out from camp to three different points commanding the neighbourhood of Multán. He moved them out, but only to march five thousand good soldiers, mostly Sikhs, with six guns, over in a body to the hostile camp. The revolt of his father, Chatar Singh, the reproaches of his own men, the distrust of himself implied in the order just given, all worked together to turn a wavering ally into an open foe.

Yet well-nigh to the last had Edwardes given Sher Singh credit for the loyalty that depends on self-interest. Mulráj, on the other hand, kept his new friends at arm's-length until he could make quite sure of their friendly purposes. Before he had got rid of his first misgivings, the besieging army had ceased to annoy Multán. On the 15th of September the trenches were deserted, the guns withdrawn, and the allied troops set in motion towards a safer camping-ground at Suráj-khúnd, about seven miles off on the road leading to Bháwalpur. The retreat was accomplished without other loss than that of camp stores and some ammunition. Strongly intrenched on his new ground, his troops in good health, spirits, and discipline, with a navigable river handy for his

supplies, the British general could afford to wait for the reinforcements which he knew must shortly come.

By this time indeed the local outbreak had swollen into something like a national revolt. The flame of rebellion was spreading fast over the Land of the Five Rivers. At Lahór some of the Sikh chiefs had been arrested; nearly all were closely watched. The palace itself, in which dwelt the young Mahárája, was guarded by an English regiment. British Sepoys were sent to garrison the strong, the holy fortress of Govindgarh, which overlooked the tanks and temples and crowded streets of Amritsar. At Pesháwar George Lawrence, the worthy brother of John and Henry, was striving against hope to keep his own province free from the fire which, already raging in the Hazára country, was soon to sweep across the Indus up to the mouth of the Khaibar Pass. Early in August he hanged an emissary from Mulráj who, after seeking help in vain from the Amir of Kábul, had tried to stir up the Yusafzai clans on the Panjáb frontier against the English. Chatar Singh, the Sikh Governor of Hazára, having raised the standard of revolt in his own province, was summoning to his aid the garrison of Bannu and the Sikh troops at Pesháwar. Over the latter Major Lawrence still held some moral sway; but Bannú joined the revolt, and erelong Dost Mohammad, mistaking English inertness for want of power, was pledging himself to make common cause with his ancient foes in return for the restitution of that fair province which Ranjit Singh had wrested from Afghán hands. With the shrewd but volcanic Amir of Kábul the old longing to regain possession of Pesháwar was still, in Kaye's words, "the madness of a life." In July he had rejected the overtures of Mulráj on the plea of loyalty to the English alliance. But now he agreed to send a force through the Khaibar in aid of the inveterate foes of his creed and country against the power whose arms had once before driven him from his throne.*

So strongly was the tide setting against us, that even the politic ruler of Kashmir was declared to be wavering in his allegiance to the British rule. Erelong the storm reached its height. The rising of the Bannú troops enabled Chatar Singh to take the field with a force against which Nicholson and Abbott with their raw levies could make but little head. The timely succour which Herbert brought from Pesháwar to the strong fort of Atak on the Indus, thwarted for a time the efforts of the Sikh leader to gain possession of so important a post. Lawrence had asked in vain

* Sir G. Lawrence; Arnold; Trotter.

for the help of a brigade from Lahór; but through many anxious weeks his tact and courage still kept the Pesháwar garrison from open revolt. Against treachery, however, like that displayed by Dost Mohammad's brother, Sultán Mohammad Khán, he strove in vain. That wily Afghán, whom Henry Lawrence had restored to freedom and to the enjoyment of his estates in Pesháwar, was now proving his gratitude by plotting with the Sikhs against Henry's brother. On the 24th of October, George Lawrence and his small party were flying for their lives from the Residency towards Kohát under an escort furnished by the arch-traitor himself. Soon after reaching Kohát, the false friend, who had solemnly vowed to protect them from all enemies, agreed to deliver them and their families into the hands of Chatar Singh. The salute of honour and the respectful, the friendly greetings which awaited Lawrence outside Pesháwar were the prelude to a captivity, shared by Mrs. Lawrence, which lasted until the following March.

By the end of October only a few brave Englishmen—Herbert in Atak, Abbott, Nicholson, and Taylor in the highlands between the Indus and the Jhilam—still held together the last shreds of British influence outside Lahór and the camp of General Whish. Left to their own resources, especially to their skill in turning to account the traditional hatred between Sikh and Mohammadan, these men long stood amidst the dangers that grew around them with a courage all the hardier as their hopes declined. Nicholson had to ride off at last with a few Pathán horsemen for Lahór, and Herbert was presently overtaken in a bootless effort to escape from a stronghold full of traitors, through a country beset with foes. But the other two, with better fortune, held on through the worst of the storm, and helped in due time to clinch the final overthrow of the insurgents' arms.*

In September the flames of revolt had spread even to Jalandhar, where Sikh priests and leaders diligently strove to rouse the people against their new masters. But the plotters reckoned without John Lawrence. Under the leadership of one Rám Singh, son of the Rájpút Wazír of Mírpur, armed bodies of Sikhs and highlanders mustered strongly in the hills around Mírpur and Pathánkót. At Lawrence's urgent request troops were at once despatched to the seat of danger. Major Fisher's column routed the insurgents, and took their stronghold at Sháhpur. Reinforced by fresh levies, Rám Singh once more defied the British power from the heights overlooking the town of Mírpur. Lawrence, who had

* Sir G. Lawrence; Trotter.

reached the place with a few local levies, was for attacking the enemy at once; but Fisher could not move without further orders from Brigadier Wheeler. At last, on the 19th of September, the attack was opened by Fisher's regulars in concert with Hodgson's Sikhs and a few hundred Rájpúts lent by some friendly hill-chiefs. After a short but sharp fight the shattered enemy fled in utter rout towards Kashmir. Rám Singh himself got clear away, but the bulk of his followers were either slain or captured in the jungles by the men of Ferris's hill-corps.*

By this time events were clearly leading up to a consummation which Lord Dalhousie had hitherto deprecated, but which many of his countrymen eagerly desired. Lord Gough's invincible dislike to a hot-weather campaign, the Governor-General's willingness to accept the judgement of an old soldier against the bolder pleadings of a young one, the blindness of his Council to the true meaning of events so far away, all concurred to bring on a crisis which furnished the Government with very good excuse for taking over the sovereignty of the Panjáb. The delays which seemed inevitable at Simla and wise at Calcutta begot only worse disorders, new temptations in the country ruled by the ministers of Dhulíp Singh. Had Edwardes, Cortlandt, and their brave ally, Bháwal Khán, been duly reinforced in May or June the rebellion might have been confined to Multán. Had a few thousand troops been sent betimes into the Hazára country, Chatar Singh would have been baffled in his designs against Pesháwar, his son might have kept true to the stronger side, and his Afghán neighbours would hardly have chosen to ally themselves with their ancient foes. On the other hand, it may be said that the crisis which delay had hastened, the prompter measures urged by Edwardes and Currie would only have postponed. The Sikhs were everywhere chafing against the new rule, which placed the noble Khálsa and the hateful Mohammadan on the same level of forced obedience to the white-skinned heretics who sat in the high places once filled by the barons and councillors of Ranjit Singh. Beaten at Sobráon, but unsubdued, surprised into submission by the treachery of their own leaders, won upon for a time by the moral greatness, the fine personal atmosphere of a Henry Lawrence; but alarmed or disgusted by the reforming zeal of his subalterns and assistants, they had yet to learn that, even in the absence of their virtual master, the fabric he had helped to rear was not so easy to overturn. It annoyed them to see those hardy

* Malleson; Trotter.

strangers, whose very presence was an eyesore to a proud people, carrying out their good intentions with so small regard for the feelings, the ideas, or the prejudices of their new clients. The sight of Major Napier and his surveyors going to and fro with theodolites and measuring-chains aroused their fears of further encroachments on their crippled rights and liberties. And thus, with their hands already clutching at the hilts of their prized swords, the Sikhs were just in the mood to draw those swords at the first summons of leaders who, like Sher Singh, addressed them in the name of an imprisoned queen, an insulted religion, a kingdom maimed and trampled under foot by the tyranny of violent and cunning foreigners. At the well-known call to arms, all but a faithful and cool-headed few rushed into that path of open insurrection which it had now become their duty as well as their delight to follow.*

By the 24th of September General Whish had finally taken up the ground he meant to hold until the time came for renewing the siege of Multán. Freed by their desertion, or his own act, from the remainder of his Sikh allies, he had little to fear now for his troops from the craft or the courage of Mulráj. The enemy might seek to harass him by frequent cannonadings and sudden attacks on weak points or detached parties, by attempts to cut off his supplies, by tampering with his native soldiery, by daring plots against his own life or those of Edwardes and his officers. But Mulráj on the whole got far worse than he gave. The steamers on the Chináb intercepted many a boatload of warlike stores bound for Multán; four hundred camels laden with grain fell into the hands of Edwardes's Patháns; and two lakhs of rupees sent from Lahór to Sher Singh were brought into the British camp just as Whish was about to borrow of his Bháwalpur ally. If a few hundred of Cortlandt's men deserted in a body, the rest remained staunch; while Mulráj was weakened early in October by the retreat of Sher Singh with all his troops from a fortress where the old distrust of a friend so late in declaring himself was rekindled by a letter

* Kaye; Arnold; Trotter. "In the first place," wrote Sher Singh, "they have broken the treaty by imprisoning and sending away to Hindustan the Mahárání, the mother of her people. Secondly, the race of Sikhs, the children of the Mahárája (Ranjit Singh), have suffered so much from their tyranny, that our very religion has been taken away from us. Thirdly, the kingdom has lost its former repute. . . . . The Khálsaji must now act with all their heart and soul. . . . . Let them murder all Farangis whenever they may find them, and cut off the posts. In return for this service they will be recompensed by the favour of the holy Gúru, by increase of rank, and by distribution of rewards."

addressed to the Sikh Rajah by the crafty Edwardes, but delivered to Mulráj, with the writer's own connivance, by one of those spies whose twofold treachery Edwardes felt no scruple in turning to the best advantage.* As soon as the bait took, Sher Singh marched away to raise the Khálsa war-cry further north, and to vindicate the Khálsa faith by plundering the villages, defiling the temples, heavily taxing the wares, and vexing or taking the live of Mohammadan dwellers on the way.

After his departure, which the English general made no attempt to hinder, Mulráj spent the rest of October in strengthening his post, recruiting his forces, and beating about for fresh allies. Emboldened by the general aspect of affairs, by the growth of his own garrison, by the inactivity, the seeming weakness of his foes, he attempted to besiege the latter in their turn. In the first days of November his advanced batteries, planted along a dry canal outside the city, so annoyed a part of our camp that, after a vain attempt to silence them, it was resolved to clear the nuisance away with the bayonet. Before the hour for attacking had come, on the morning of the 7th, Edwardes's outposts were fiercely assailed by the foe, whose numbers had just been increased by the sudden treachery of half a regiment of Cortlandt's Sikhs. A sharp hand-to-hand fight was going against Edwardes, when Cortlandt called on his own men to prove their loyalty then and there. With a shout they bounded forward, and to their aid presently came the fierce Daudputras of Bháwalpur. Driven back from the works they had nearly won, the assailants were hotly chased to their own trenches by men whom an hour before Edwardes himself durst not have asked to follow him in aid of the work cut out for Brigadier Markham.

By this time a strong column of all arms was marching under that officer across Edwardes's front to turn the enemy's left. A timely charge of Major Wheeler's horse cleared the way for Markham's infantry, as it swept onwards in even line upon the intrenchments in the enemy's rear. At the same moment Edwardes brought his own men into line along the canal, and the two commanders pressed on to finish their appointed task. Of the six guns within their reach not one returned to Multán. The enemy fled in wild disorder, leaving many hundreds slain or disabled on the field. After the victory of Suráj-khúnd the British general had no more attacks to fear from his baffled foe during the

* Edwardes.—In this letter Edwardes pretended to thank his friend, Sher Singh, for helping him to deceive Mulráj.

weeks that still preceded the renewal of the siege. While Edwardes and Lake kept the roads open to the Satlaj and the Chináb, the loyal Shaikh Imám-ud-dín was driving the rebels out of the neighbouring province of Jhang. While Robert Napier and his pioneers were laying up huge store of fascines and gabions for the coming siege, the rest of the troops had leisure enough to watch the changeful humour of events elsewhere, to wonder at the strange delay in launching the Bombay column from Rohri, to discuss the recent meeting at Pesháwar and the chances against Herbert's holding out long at Atak; to speculate on Gulab Singh's motives for sending troops under Colonel Steinbach towards the Jhilam, and to follow the movements of Lord Gough's army from the right bank of the Rávi to the ground where it rested after the fight of Súdúlapur.*

* Edwardes; Trotter.

CHAPTER V.

THE SECOND SIKH WAR.

THE collapse of the siege of Multán had awakened the British authorities from their prolonged slumber. A large army was straightway ordered to assemble at Firózpur, while a smaller force of Bombay troops was to muster at Rohri on the Indus for an early march upon Multán. At Calcutta the Governor-General shook himself free from all past doubts and delusions, put the Bengal Army at once on a war-footing, wrote home to explain the need of prompt action upon a large scale, and followed up his acceptance of the challenge flung at him from all parts of the Panjáb by hurrying up the Ganges towards Ambála, the great northern station at the foot of the Simla hills. "Unwarned by precedent, uninfluenced by example, the Sikh nation has called for war, and, on my word, Sirs, war they shall have, and with a vengeance"—were the stirring words uttered by Lord Dalhousie at the farewell dinner given by the officers of Barrackpore. Of one mind with him was now the Commander-in-Chief, whose former measures in aid of Sir F. Currie, if taken cheerfully, had still been taken under protest. At last, however, things wore another look: the time for moving British troops had come; and the prospect of a grand cold-weather campaign gave wings to the energy which had been but half awakened by the earlier plottings at Lahór and the victory at Sadusain. Before the end of September regiments were advancing from Meerut, Ambála, Sabáthu, and Jalandhar towards the Satlaj or the Rávi. Before the end of October the leading brigades of the Army of the Panjáb had marched past Lahór across the Rávi to the camping-ground at Shahdara, which covered the bridge of boats and the Sikh capital, imperilled but a few days back by the sudden approach of Sher Singh.

Had that leader only known, or thoroughly tested, the weakness of the Lahór garrison, he might have dealt his enemies a heavier blow than the burning of a couple of boats. Instead, however,

of making a dash at Lahór, he withdrew his main army, alrea mustering ten thousand strong, towards the Chináb, and the ro by which his father would come down to meet him as soon Atak had shared the fate of Pesháwar.

By the 3rd of November seven thousand good troops we encamped at Shahdara ready to move forward under the best Gough's cavalry leaders, Brigadier Cureton. By the 19th the numbers had increased to ten thousand; a force which man deemed more than equal to the task of driving Sher Singh fro the Chináb. On the 21st Gough himself came into camp ten miles from Rámnagar with several thousand more men. Other regiments were still behind, and the heavy guns, after so long a warning, had only quitted Firozpur on the 15th. The enemy, however, were still in force about Rámnagar, their advanced post on the left bank of the Chináb; and Lord Gough was eager to drive them at once across that river. At three of the next morning the whole of Cureton's fine cavalry, with two brigades of foot, two light field batteries, and as many troops of horse-artillery, marched off in the darkness towards Rámnagar, with the fiery old Gough himself at their head. Some skirmishing took place about the village and fort of Rámnagar; but the Sikhs were already retreating across the river to their main body, when our guns first opened on them a quick, and for some minutes a telling, fire. Still bent on further mischief, Lane's and Warner's men galloped their six-pounders far over the deep sand which then formed a wide border to the stream whose bed at other seasons it became. As they fired at the runaways crowding across the ford, answering shots began to reach them from the heavier guns placed in battery beyond the river. Erelong the fire grew too hot even for British gunners to face without due cause. When the order to limber up was given, one of Lane's guns was found stuck fast in the deep sand. To waste precious lives in vain attempts to remove it would have been wilful murder. Unwillingly spoken, the order to spike and abandon the gun was unwillingly obeyed. As the sorrowing gunners slowly followed their retiring comrades, a squadron of the far-famed 3rd Dragoons under Captain Ouvry drew off the enemy's attention by a daring charge into a mass of Sikhs posted near a green, sand-girt island within easy cover of their own guns.

By this time the British infantry had lined the low ridge that marked the river's width at its time of flood. Before them lay a broad stretch of rough sand, dotted with a clump or two of trees,

h charging dragoons, retiring gunners, and bodies of Sikh se and foot; beyond these a thin white line of water; in the ner background, among their tents, a long bright moving array Sikh warriors, clad in white or yellow, and numbering in all bout fifteen thousand men. The 3rd Dragoons and the 8th Bengal Cavalry charged boldly up to a deep dry *nallah*, from whose steep banks a line of matchlock-men kept up a murderous ire. But it soon became clear that nothing more could be done y cavalry or light field-pieces against a whole army of horse and oot, covered by the fire of twenty-eight heavy guns planted on he further side of a scarcely fordable river. White's cavalry, obeying the order for retreat, gained the shelter of some trees near the ridge, while the infantry brigades of Godby and Hoggan fell back out of gunshot range. The fighting thus far had served its purpose. We had beaten up the enemy's quarters, ascertained their real strength, and virtually driven them from the left bank of the Chináb.

But the retreating movement emboldened the enemy, who again swarmed across the river, over the sands, up to the abandoned gun, which they succeeded in carrying off. At last, about noon, they came within tempting reach of the British cavalry. The fiery colonel of the 14th Dragoons, William Havelock, sought and got leave to check their insolence by a timely charge. His impatient troopers thundered after him, nobly seconded by their swarthy comrades of the 5th Bengal Cavalry, under Colonel Alexander. In a few minutes the Sikh horse were broken up and scattered by the headlong onset of an officer famed for his daring in the wars of an earlier day. Had he but pulled up then and there, no harm would have ensued. But the sight of another body of Sikhs tempted him on to his own destruction and that of many more. Waving his sword and shouting to his men to follow him, he dashed on through the clogging sands, further yet into the mud and water, where horses floundered and men sat helpless under a cruel grape and matchlock-fire, aided by the sharp *talwárs* of light horsemen prompt to take a dragoon at disadvantage. The famous charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava was not more splendid, nor much more fatally absurd. The Sikhs, indeed, were borne back with heavy loss to the river's brink and the shelter of their batteries in mid-channel and along the opposite bank. But the passing gain was dearly purchased by the loss of ninety men killed or wounded and a hundred and forty horses. Havelock himself fell covered with wounds by the water's edge, where his

mangled headless trunk was found, some days after, by his mou
ing comrades.

Several officers, including Colonel Alexander, were more or
badly hurt, and Captain Fitzgerald died of his wounds. But
heaviest loss of that day was the death of the gallant Cureton
who was riding forward to stay Havelock's last advance when a
matchlock ball laid him low. Renowned for brave deeds in many
a campaign against French, Afgháns, Maráthas, Sikhs; beloved
by officers and men; the dear friend and trusty counsellor of Lord
Gough; he fell by the side of that very regiment in which, a wild
youth fleeing from his creditors, he had once enlisted as a private
trooper. His body, which Holmes of the Irregulars was badly
wounded in trying to rescue, was buried at Rámnagar with all
honours in the same tomb to which Havelock's was afterwards
consigned.*

It was past noon when the last trooper rode back to the main body, then drawn up between the town of Rámnagar and the sands of the Chináb. By this time Sir Joseph Thackwell, urged by the sounds of firing in his front, had of his own motion brought up the troops left behind that morning at Saháran. But the heavy guns escorted by Penny's brigade were still some marches off, and without their help Lord Gough declined to attempt any further movement. During the next week his troops were employed in digging trenches and throwing up earthworks for the heavy guns which Horsford on the 29th of November at last brought into camp. Thus strengthened, Lord Gough decided, after a council of war, to turn Sher Singh's position by a flank march beyond the Chináb. The Governor-General had forbidden him to cross that river unless he could see his way to attack and rout a Sikh army. But the way now lay clear before him; the hour for striking a hard and sure blow had come. About one A.M. on the 1st of December Sir Joseph Thackwell led out of Gough's camp a compact force of all arms, about seven thousand strong, with thirty light and two heavy guns. Marching slowly, for the darkness, the broken ground, and the hindrance of a pontoon-train, up the left bank of the river, to a ford which proved impracticable, Thackwell resolved to push on towards Wazirabad, where Nicholson's Patháns had got sixteen boats together ready for his use. A long march under a hot sun brought the half-fainting troops by dusk to their new goal, some twenty-five miles from Rámnagar.

The passage of the river was begun forthwith; but the growing

* Arnold; Trotter; Sandford's "Journal of a Subaltern."

kness, the dangers and delays involved in crossing several ches of a sand-begirt stream, in some places barely fordable, brought the work to a standstill for that night. One brigade to bivouac, cold, wet, and hungry, on a sandbank halfway ss. By noon of the 2nd the remainder of the troops destined llow Thackwell were safely landed on the right bank. Two rs later, when the soldiers had eaten their scanty dinner, the h down-stream began, and twelve miles were got over by tfall. Early the next morning Thackwell set forward to turn eft of the Sikh entrenchments, still some miles away, while gh helped him by a simultaneous attack upon their front. had not gone six miles when a messenger from Gough came to id all further advance until he had been reinforced by Godby's gade of foot, then marching up stream to a ford about six s from Rámnagar. Thackwell therefore halted his force near the village of Sádúlapur, sending off a strong party of horse and foot to guard the ford. Somewhere beyond the village lay the enemy, and Godby's coming was eagerly awaited as the signal for a fight that would humble the pride of the Khálsa, and enable the victors once more to enjoy the comforts of a good meal and a tent at night.

Suddenly one round shot, then another, rolled among the knots of officers resting in front of the line. In spite of his scouts and advanced patrols, this was the first clear warning that Thackwell had received of his nearness to the foe. Standing to their arms, his troops fell back to a safe distance from the fields of tall sugar-cane that linked together—"like a bracelet of alternate lava and malachite"*—three small mud villages in their front. Mistaking the purpose of this movement, the enemy came on shouting, beating their tomtoms, and blazing away with their field-pieces. Swarms of light horse threatened either flank. Forbidden to advance, Thackwell's infantry lay down under a fire which might else have done them no little harm. Meanwhile our cavalry and horse-artillery, advancing from both flanks, soon drove back the Sikh horsemen, who relished neither the well-aimed shrapnel-fire nor the bold skirmishers of the dragoons. The remaining batteries, posted to cover the three brigades of foot, poured in so steady a hail of shot upon the foe, that by four o'clock, two hours after the fight began, the fire of the Sikh guns had clearly slackened. A little later the whole Sikh line was falling back, guns and all, out of reach of the British fire.

* Thackwell's "Second Sikh War."

At that very time Thackwell had received from Lord Go another letter giving him free leave to advance, whether God brigade had come up or no. Had that brigade been with he might have ventured, even at so late an hour, to unl "his brave, steady, ardent infantry" against the retiring But Godby, who had left camp that morning, was still at river-side, busied in ferrying his troops across a ford that wa ford, by means of a pontoon-train, which had utterly faile serve him as a bridge.* It was growing late; Thackwell's were tired and hungry; nothing was known of the enemy's position or of their actual strength. It was only certain Sher Singh's army had disappeared that morning from Gou view. An advance by twilight over unknown, perhaps ro ground, against an enemy of twice his own strength, seemed Thackwell and most of his officers the less desirable, in Gough had owned himself unable to offer the promised help from his own camp across the river. So the warier, if not wiser counsels turned the scale against the bolder pleadings of Colonel Pennycuick, backed by the wishes, uttered or unsaid, of nearly the whole force. Baulked of their promised prey, our tired soldiers had time to eat and rest beside their arms and dream of the victory that awaited them on the morrow.

But disappointment was again to be theirs. During the night a loud barking of dogs was heard in the villages fronting the British line. When morning dawned, the Sikhs were already miles away on the road to the river Jhilam, leaving behind them no other traces of the fight than a few score bodies torn by the British shrapnel, and a few Sikhs found dead or dying in the villages afterwards entered by the pursuing cavalry. By the 3rd of December Gough's foremost batteries opened fire at a short distance from the river's bank, but their shots were wasted on a deserted camp. Sher Singh had gone off, none knew whither, and no attempt was made to follow him until the morning after Sádúlapur, when Sir Walter Gilbert, with some dragoons, lancers, and horse-artillery, crossed over from Rámnagar to aid in harassing the enemy's retreat. But Sher Singh had played his game with a skill and boldness that seemed to ensure success. While half his army was holding Thackwell in check, he was quietly but swiftly leading the other half out of danger's reach towards the jungles and ravines that border the Jhilam. Not before the 6th

* He had, after much delay, to use the pontoons as ferry-boats, rowed over in pairs by his own men.

of December was anything seen of the enemy. On that day two large bodies of Sikhs were found by Thackwell's scouting parties posted in thick jungle about ten miles from Hélah, where the British infantry were resting from the toils and hardships of the last four days.*

Twenty-one men killed and fifty-one wounded made up the whole of our loss at Sádúlapur. Lord Gough's despatch on this occasion thanked the Almighty for having vouchsafed to our arms the most successful issue to the extensive combinations rendered necessary to effect the passage of the Chináb and the defeat and dispersion of the Sikh force." A partial success was magnified into a splendid triumph of British strategy; the skilful retreat of the Sikhs towards ground chosen beforehand was made to assume the guise of a disorderly flight before an irresistible foe. And, what, after all, had been accomplished? A series of blundering movements described as "extensive combinations" had landed our troops across the Chináb, and compelled the Sikhs to fall back upon the Jhilam instead of advancing southwards on Multán. This gain we had purchased by the loss of a gun and some valuable lives at Rámnagar, and by the incomplete success at Sádúlapur. Thanks to difficult and dangerous fords, to an unmanageable pontoon-train, to defective reconnaissances, to over-wary tactics both in camp and at Ambála, where Lord Dalhousie was now staying, a simple plan for circumventing Sher Singh had miscarried at every point, save only in cutting him off from any movement he might have thought of making against General Whish. Had Gough trusted more to his own instincts, or been less hampered by the waiting policy of his civil chief, had Thackwell dared at the right moment to strike hard at the enemy in his front,† the Commander-in-Chief's despatch might have announced a victory almost as crushing as Gujarát. There was no sufficient reason why Gough's main army could not have crossed the Chináb before the Sikhs had begun cannonading Thackwell. The utter silence, the seeming lack of all movement in his own front, must have revealed to him all that a shrewd commander would care to learn. To attack an army on its march, whether straight to the rear or towards its left flank, would have been an easy task, in which Thackwell could have borne his part. Caught between two fires, Sher Singh's

* Arnold; Thackwell; Trotter.

† That Thackwell missed his opportunity at Sádúlapur, was maintained among others both by Nicholson and Henry Lawrence. The troops opposed to him did not greatly outnumber his own.

army must have been half annihilated, its guns taken, Gujarát forestalled, while Atak itself would have been saved from falling into the hands of Chatar Singh. We should have witnessed no rash advance into the jungles of Chilianwála, no unseemly waiting afterwards for help from the army that took Multán.

Even after the 5th of December much might have been done to retrieve past shortcomings had Lord Gough been allowed to leave the safe, the convenient shelter of the Chináb. A swift pursuit such as he himself desired, would still in all likelihood have saved Atak, would at least have enabled him to crush in detail the forces of Sher and Chatar Singh. But the cold hand of higher authority was again upon his shoulder. Looking mainly towards Multán, which the Bombay troops were slowly nearing, Lord Dalhousie was more than ever shy of risking a well-timed blow at the real centre of the Khálsa revolt. And so for more than five weeks the brave Army of the Panjáb lay idle in the plains about Helah,* while Sher Sing was busy entrenching himself on the heights of Rasúl, covering the road by which his father would come down as soon as Atak, cut off from all hope of timely succour, should have been surrendered into his hands.†

Leaving the two main armies thus watching each other, let us turn to look at things elsewhere. The same day that saw the fighting at Sádúlapur marked the close of a brief but brilliant campaign in Jalandhar. Throughout October Brigadier Wheeler was employed in capturing Sikh strongholds and scattering insurgent bands in the country north of Lahór. In November he found fresh work cut out for him in clearing the country between the Rávi and the Chináb. While he was thus engaged, Rám Singh, the fugitive of September, was rallying the Sikhs of the Bári Doáb‡—the province lying between the Biyás and the Rávi—for one more raid into British ground. On the 19th of November he led his recruits with six guns against Pathánkót, then garrisoned by fifty of Lawrence's Sikhs and a few police. But if Wheeler was absent, the Commissioner of Jalandhar was quite able to take care of himself. His name alone was worth a strong garrison, and his two lieutenants, Barnes and Saunders,

* The headquarters remained encamped at Rámnagar until the end of the year.

† Arnold; Thackwell; Trotter.

‡ The "doábs" of the Panjáb are called by the first letters of their enclosing rivers. Thus Bari is formed from Biyás and Rávi, Rechna from Rávi and Chináb, and so on.

showed themselves worthy of their chief. Grasping his nettle with a strong, sure hand, John Lawrence at once got together a few hundred of his own Sikhs and hillmen, and hastened by forced marches to meet the foe. Scared away from Pathánkót by the swift advance of Major Simpson's regulars, Rám Singh retreated on Dinanagar, within the frontier of the Sikh kingdom. But Lawrence would not be balked of his prey. With four hundred horse and foot and two light guns he gave chase across the Rávi, while Simpson and Ferris led their troops round towards the enemy's flank. On the morning of the 26th November his whole force, commanded by Major Waller, came up with the insurgents, who after a brief struggle turned and fled. Had Ferris's men reached their ground by the time appointed, very few of the runaways would have escaped.

At Dinanagar Lawrence halted, but not for long. On the 24th the Jaswan Rajah and the Bídi, or Sikh high-priest, at Unah in the lower range of hills stretching from Kashmir down to the Satlaj, had risen in revolt against the "Sahibs." About the same time the Mulmóri Rajah had done likewise in the upper range of the same hills. Leaving Mr. Barnes and Major Ferris to deal with the latter, Lawrence marched with all speed against the Bídí and his friends. Five hundred Sikhs, two companies of Sepoys, a troop of horse, and four horsed-guns, formed the whole of his little army. On his way across Jalandhar he turned aside to attack another Rajah who had just seized the fort of Dangoh. At the first sounds of his advance the Rajah fled. The timely capture of his son enabled Lawrence to ensure the father's surrender on terms too merciful to be rejected. Happily for Lawrence, the people of the country took but little part in these risings, while the headmen of the villages cheerfully placed their services at his command.

On the 2nd of December the rebel leaders at Unah and Aknót saw their forces scattered with heavy slaughter, their strongholds taken and dismantled by Hodgson's Sikhs and a wing of the 29th Sepoys. The Jaswan Rajah yielded himself a prisoner, and the Bídí with a few followers vanished into the heart of the hills. Barnes also, with the aid of Ferris's rangers, had by this time routed the Mulmóri rebels, and become master of the Rajah's palace. By the 3rd of December Lawrence's little campaign was fairly over. "Within thirteen days," he wrote to Sir F. Currie, "peace and order have been restored throughout the territory by the capture or dispersion of the insurgents. This result has been effected with little loss of life and hardly any

expense to Government. Had we not thus promptly acted am convinced that the rebellion would have assumed a formidab aspect, and have cost blood and treasure to suppress. Many wl had every intention of joining against us were paralyzed by o movements, and the good intentions of the well-disposed wc confirmed."*

Fortunate indeed it was for England that such a ruler had be placed in charge of a province lately won from Sikh masters, a peopled by men of Sikh blood, or by races having little in co mon with their new lords. Had John Lawrence been less bo less self-reliant, less ready to take occasion by the hand; had military insight been less keen and true, or his mastery over human instruments less strong and wide-reaching, the dan which he seemed to quell so easily might have grown to very l proportions indeed. How large it were idle to guess; but e reader of Indian history must know how often a well-timed b ness has turned out to be the highest prudence, and how much of our hold on India has depended on the exercise of those great qualities which Lawrence was to display yet more conspicuously some years later on a wider field. Enough here to say that, but for his wise promptitude and happy daring, the success of our arms in the Panjáb would have been sorely hindered by a growing rebellion beyond the Biyás.

Meanwhile the troops at Suráj-khúnd were waiting for the reinforcements that still, for some inscrutable reason, lagged far behind. Not till after the 25th November had the whole of the Bombay column set out from Rohri, nor had the last regiment taken its place in Whish's camp before the 21st of the following month. On the 25th and 26th of December Whish was engaged in taking up the ground his troops were to hold during the renewed siege. After more than three months of inexplicable delay, the British tents were again rising in long white lines on the spot where they had stood in the beginning of September. Those of the Bombay column filled the space erewhile allotted to our allies; the Bengal troops lay a little to the rear of their old position while Edwardes held his soldiers in reserve near the old camping-ground of his false ally, Sher Singh. Some thirty thousand in all, of whom sixteen thousand were British soldiers or Indian Sepoys, with more than sixty siege-guns, were now arrayed against the rebel stronghold, whose natural strength had of cours

* Arnold; Malleson; Trotter; Panjáb Blue-book.

been doubled since the day when Edwardes drove Mulráj beneath the shelter of his own walls.*

Not an hour was now lost in pressing the siege. On the 27th combined attack in four columns was made on the suburbs that overed three sides of the town and fortress. A fifth column of dwardes's Irregulars opened the business at noon by a feint ttack on the canal bridge at Shish Mahál. While these were skly engaging the enemy on that side, the four main columns forth on their several missions. In aid of the right attack, led Colonel Young, the left and centre columns under Nash, on, and Dundas, struggled forward beneath a galling fire, ve back the enemy from post to post, and planting some of their own batteries by the way, swept on with unflagging ardour almost up to the city walls. Scared at these successes, the rebels made no serious effort to check the advance of the right column on the fortified brick-kilns in its front. One after another the noble tomb of Mulráj's father, Sáwan Mal, the Blue Mosque, even then filled with priests and women, Mulráj's summer-house, the Am-Khás, all posts of great strength, were abandoned without a struggle by the bewildered foe. By four in the afternoon, at a cost comparatively small, our troops had won the whole line of suburbs between Márisital and the canal.†

A success so thorough, so little expected, gave a new turn to the general's purpose. Instead of attacking the citadel only, he now resolved to take the city first, in pursuance of the plan recommended by his chief engineer, Colonel Cheape, who as Napier's senior had taken his place. That same evening the trenches were opened and batteries planted at ranges varying from six hundred to one hundred yards. All next day and night a destructive fire was poured into fort and city; Mulráj's gunners returning the compliment with more of earnestness than effect. On the 29th all our mortars kept playing on the doomed town with a force which neither stone nor flesh and blood could long withstand. Hardly a shot seemed to miss its mark. One building after another caught fire; and the brave garrison could send back but few and feeble answers from their own guns. Two thousand of their best troops made a fierce sally against the Sidi-lal-ke-Baid, whence Powell's sailors kept cheerfully pounding at close quarters

* At least one strong battery of heavy guns and mortars was worked by the sailors of the Indian Navy, while a squadron of steamers, commanded by Captain Powell, did excellent service against the enemy during the siege—(Edwardes; Low).

† Edwardes; Trotter.

the Delhi Gate. But after some hard fighting they fell back before the dashing onsets of Edwardes's Patháns, led by a few young Englishmen who held their own lives cheap, whether in discharge of duty or in quest of mere adventure. By the side of Edwardes himself, as he issued his orders during the fray, stood his old friend and master Sir Henry Lawrence, who, with his knightly honours fresh upon him, had hurried out from England, his health still weakly, as soon as he heard of the rising storm in the Panjáb.

Early the next morning new batteries opened on the city wall from eighty yards off. That was a fatal day for the besieged. For four hours our heavy guns and mortars kept vomiting their deadly hail, while Mulráj's gunners still sent back shot for shot with unflinching steadiness, with aim unusually good. Suddenly, at noon, amidst the din, the dust, the smoke of that fierce duel, there happened that which, for the moment, swallowed up all lesser noises in one awful, far-resounding roar. A shell from a mortar laid by Lieutenant Newall,* piercing the strong dome of the Jamma Musjid, or Great Mosque, in the citadel, blew up the enemy's chief magazine which lay therein. With a roar that seemed to shake the earth for miles round, the huge building rose slowly, a column of smoking ruins, into the air. At the height of several hundred feet the column spread out like a mighty cloud, brooding for a few seconds over the hostile camps below. As the cloud presently passed away, its heavier atoms having fallen again to earth, a great shout of triumph filled the sky. The sudden explosion of four hundred thousand pounds of powder had cost the lives of five hundred men, annihilated a noble old temple, and caused much damage to the surrounding defences. Once more, however, raged the battle of the guns; those of the enemy thundering on as steadily as if nothing unusual had just occurred.†

On the 31st the same dreadful argument was carried on with the firmness of despair on one side, with a stern foreknowledge of coming victory on the other. About noon a great fire broke out in the enemy's chief storehouse in the citadel, and raged unappeasably all day and night, helping our gunners to pour in their deadly salvos by the light of flames that fattened on many tons of

* According to Edwardes, the gun was laid by Lieutenant Newall, of the Bengal Artillery. According to Mr. Low's informant ("History of the Indian Navy") it was Captain Powell who pointed out the true position of the magazine in a building near the Mosque.

† Edwardes.

and other combustibles, besides a vast store of good grain. On the morning of New Year's Day, 1849, the fire was still blazing. That day the British batteries kept widening the breach in the Khúni-Burj, or Bloody Bastion, and crumbling the wall by the Delhi Gate. Next morning the task of storming the city began. An hour after midnight Edwardes marched his men out for a feint attack on the left. Two hours later Colonel Stalker's Bombay column was advancing towards the breach in the Khúni-Burj, while a Bengal column under Colonel Franks took its way towards the Delhi Gate. When Captain Smyth of the 32nd Foot had led his stormers under a heavy matchlock-fire, across an intervening hollow, up to the expected point of entrance, he found before him no real breach, but an insurmountable wall. It was useless staying there to be shot down. So the Bengal column turned off towards the Khúni-Burj, into which, after a short but sharp struggle, the Bombay stormers, led by Leith of the Bombay Fusiliers, had already forced their way. The breach itself had proved easy to climb, but the new works hastily thrown up inside checked the assailants, who were falling fast under a heavy musket-fire, when John Bennet, colour-sergeant of the Fusiliers, sprang up the parapet and planted the British colours on the top. In a moment they were riddled and rent to rags. But Bennet's example and Captain Leith's daring spurred their comrades to fresh efforts. With one mighty rush they overleaped the barrier, drove the enemy back with great slaughter, and, reinforced by the Bengal column, soon became masters of nearly the whole town. At daybreak of the 3rd Colonel Young, with three companies of the 10th Foot, carried the defences at the Daulat Gate and sent the enemy flying pell-mell through the narrow lanes beyond. Those who escaped the victors' shot or steel slunk off by night from a captured city, from the shadow of a fortress whose gates Mulráj had already closed against all fugitives.

A sad wreck had the captured city indeed become. Its streets were everywhere strewn with dead and dying, mostly Sikhs, unearthly in their long hair. Its houses everywhere stood riddled, split, and blackened by that prolonged storm of shot and shell. Of the citizens who survived, few remained to witness the work of plunder which, in spite of the general's orders and precautions, still went unblushingly forward. Meanwhile not a day was lost in pushing the siege of the citadel, which Mulráj still held with three thousand or more of his picked troops. On the 4th of January it was invested on almost every side. For many days

yet did the insurgent leader and his brave followers defend their last stronghold amidst a cannonade which drove the gunners again and again from their guns, unroofed nearly every building, and left Mulráj himself no safer shelter than the bomb-proof gateway of the Sikhi Gate. Twice at least had he sought for a parley. Unconditional surrender was still the general's stern reply. The citadel was very strong; it defied taking in other than the regular way, and despair gave fresh courage to its garrison. Nearer and nearer crept the breaching-batteries; more and more fatally burst the shells. Still the hard shot sank nearly harmless into the brick-lined walls, and still the rebel gunners plied their dangerous task. One battery, manned by the Indian Navy, gave special annoyance to the besieged. On the bold sailors thus engaged in worrying "that 'ere pirate Moll Rag," so fierce a fire of shells rained down from the fort that, on the 9th of January, their battery works, made wholly of fascines covered with raw hides, were burnt to the ground, and the guns and powder with great difficulty withdrawn from the blazing wreck.

By this time the besiegers had begun mining up to the fort-walls. On the 12th, the first and last sally made by the garrison was speedily repulsed by a covering party of the 10th Foot, headed by the engineer on duty, Major Robert Napier. Two days later, the sappers had worked their way to the crest of the glacis, or slope, at the north-east angle of the fort, within reach of the brickbats flung at them from a bastion across the moat. On the 17th, our eight-inch shells kept tearing up the mud and brickwork of the walls, while the eighteen and twenty-four-pounders increased the havoc with their ceaseless battering at the very shortest ranges. On the 18th, the counterscarp, by the Gate of Dignity, was blown bodily into the ditch. On the city side of the fort a like success was scored on the 21st. Over these two breaches the rebels drove dogs and horses with perfect ease.

By that time, indeed, all within the fortress was a mere wreck; and the worn, wasted garrison saw nothing left them but prompt surrender, or one last charge for life or death through the ranks of an exulting foe. To this effect they spoke out openly to Mulráj, whose mind had been nearly made up on the 19th, when for the third time he asked, and obtained leave, to send a messenger to the British camp. No messenger was sent on the day appointed, but now once more Mulráj's courage failed him. Life was still dear to the man whose followers had thrown theirs away so lavishly on his behalf. He would neither fall in the breach

like Tippu, nor head his Sikhs in one wild effort to cut their way through the besieging hosts. So on the 21st his messenger came in to beg for his master's life, and the honour of his master's women. Whish wrote back word that Mulráj's life would be at the disposal of the Governor-General; but as for his ladies, "the British Government wars with men—not women." Mulráj was invited to yield himself up before sunrise of the next day. "After sunrise," added Whish, "you must take the fortune of war."

Before the hour appointed, M[illegible]ad given due notice of his intention to surrender—happen what might. The batteries, which up to that moment had kept up their fire upon the fort, now ceased to play; and the troops, already mustered for the final assault, now formed in line on each side of the road along which the rebel leader would have to pass on his way to the tent of the British commander. It was a wet, stormy morning, that of the 22nd, and delays occurred in completing the surrender, which tried the patience of our troops. At length, about nine o'clock, the long train of vanquished warriors began winding down that human avenue amidst ever-widening gleams of returning sunshine. Giving up their arms, horses, and accoutrements into the hands of the prize-agents, they stalked away as half resentful of their own escape from the death which so many of their comrades had undergone. Behind them, in the midst of his friends and kinsmen, rode Mulráj himself; his small, strong, graceful figure clad in rich silks and goodly armour, and seated on a noble Arab, splendid with its scarlet trappings; the small dark eyes in his fair, finely-cut face glancing restlessly from right to left, in answer to the curious gaze bent upon him by soldier after soldier as he passed on to give up his sword to the English general. His thoughts at such a moment none might clearly read in features which pride and Eastern habit had brought under strong control. But the grief of his special friends, on parting from their captive lord, spoke touchingly of something lovable in the man whom most Englishmen loathed as a criminal, worthy of no lighter punishment than death.*

The capture of all Multán, after twenty-four days of open trenches, and a vast expenditure of shot and shell,† had cost the

* Edwardes; Low; Arnold; Trotter.

† It was reckoned that 13,853 shots and 27,743 shells, carcases, and other projectiles were fired from sixty-seven pieces of siege ordnance during the siege, besides the work done by the field artillery—(Low).

besiegers no more than 210 slain, and 982 wounded. On the former list were nine officers, on the latter fifty-five. When the victors entered the citadel, they found much food for wonder in the strength of the ramparts, in the havoc everywhere wrought by the British fire, and yet more in the untold wealth which tempted many of them to deeds of forbidden plunder. Heaped up in underground vaults, and the courtyards of mosques and palaces, or strewn among the wrecks of the great explosion, were found such a store of useful or costly things, of silks, shawls, money, silver-handled swords, scabbards glittering with gold and gems; of grain, indigo, opium, salt and sulphur, that one could readily understand Mulráj's motive for seeking at all hazards to retain possession of the stronghold where all these riches, garnered up by himself and his father, lay. Besides all this, a perfect arsenal of warlike weapons, harness, stores—everywhere met the eye and enhanced the victors' exultation over a success on the whole so cheaply won. So rich a booty, however, was not to be shared out among Whish's men. It was set aside for the Indian Government in payment of its claims upon the Lahór Darbár. Only the £200,000, for which the city had been ransomed, would fall to the captors' share.

On the evening of the 26th January, 1849, a sad but solemn scene was enacted in presence of the British troops. The bodies of Agnew and Anderson were disinterred from their unhonoured graves, near the spot where they had fallen, and, carefully wrapt up in rich shawls, were borne by the men of Anderson's regiment, the 1st Bombay Fusiliers, to their future resting-place on the topmost point of the citadel. As if to crown the retribution taken for their cruel murder, the funeral party marched slowly behind their mournful burden up the broad sloping breach through which the storming columns were to have forced their way on the very morning of Mulráj's surrender.

Placing Edwardes in charge of Multán, General Whish, on the 27th, despatched one of his Bengal brigades, under Brigadier Markham, towards the camp of Lord Gough. Three days later, the other brigade, under Hervey, marched off in the same direction. Mulráj himself, escorted by Lieutenant Henry of the Bombay Army, accompanied the Bengal troops to the point where his own road branched off towards the camp of the Governor-General, near Lahór. On the 2nd February, Brigadier-General Dundas led off the Bombay division, nearly 5,000 strong, on the road already taken by his comrades of Bengal. How eagerly

Gough was looking for the promised help from Whish, the events which had meanwhile happened beyond the Chináb will now.

After Sher Singh's retreat upon the Jhilam Thackwell's force lay encamped, as we saw, at Helah, while his chief with the headquarters remained at Rámnagar. On December 18, Lord Gough himself crossed the Chináb. By the first day of the New Year he had brought his troops within three miles of his second in command. Slight skirmishes between the advanced patrols, a raid or two of Sikhs on our forage parties, a fight or two between bodies of Sikh and British light horse, took place in the deep belt of jungle that covered the ten miles between Helah and Rasúl. A movement of the Sikhs towards our right front at Dingi on December 18 was met by the despatch of Brigadier Pope, with three light guns, and two regiments of horse to guard the fords at Wazirábád. Thackwell himself was warned to prepare for a march from Helah, but afterwards ordered to stand fast. And so up to January 10 the Army of the Panjáb lay idle, wondering, chafing at its own inaction, and trying amidst other diversions to account for the salutes so often fired from the camp beyond the jungles in its front.

Lord Gough's inaction was partly due to Lord Dalhousie's express injunctions, partly perhaps to his own hesitancy in view of the long-delayed advance upon Multán. It was only about December 22 that Lord Dalhousie loosened the trammels that checked the free movements of his veteran Commander-in-Chief. If the latter "could satisfy his own judgment regarding the state of his supplies, his supports, and communications," and could see his way to attack the enemy without heavy loss, the Governor-General would "be happy to see a blow struck that would destroy him, add honour to the British arms, and avert the prospect of a protracted and costly war." Gough, however, seems to have waited for some definite news from Multán, which only reached him about January 7.* The capture of the city may have convinced him that the time for moving forward had come. By the tenth of that month the two wings of Lord Gough's army were encamped together at Lasúrí, a little to the right of Helah. The tidings on that day brought to him of the fall of Atak, after a brave defence of nearly two months, decided Gough to act promptly on the Governor-General's advice, as conveyed through his agent, Major

* Sandford's "Journal."

Mackeson, that a hard blow should now be struck at the enemy in front with the least possible delay.*

Trusting in his power to strike that blow before Chatar Singh could join hands with his son upon the Jhilam, the brave old general eagerly entered on the path he would gladly have trodden a month before.† On the 11th he reviewed his troops, and exhorted them in cheering words to prove their soldiership in the coming fight. Next day his army was encamped at Dingi, whence the Sikhs had fallen back into the sheltering jungle, their right resting on Múng, their left and centre guarded by the broken ground and strong intrenchments about the village and heights of Rasúl. It was a very strong position, held by more than 30,000 men, with a battery of sixty guns; a position which only a brave commander, tired out by long inaction, and emboldened by the eager spirit of his troops, and by the memory of his former achievements, would have ventured to assail with an army under 14,000 strong.

Every one in camp looked forward to a decisive struggle on the morrow. That night Lord Gough's tent was filled with commanders of regiments, brigades, and divisions, met to hear or consider the plans they would soon be helping to carry out. At seven the next morning, the memorable 13th January, our troops began their march upon the Sikh position, with the aim of turning its left, and so cutting off the enemy's way of retreat across the Jhilam. The cold morning mists melted away in the conquering sunshine as the infantry stepped forward in parallel columns of brigades through a country more or less thickly strewn with brushwood. Towards noon the left centre column fell in with a strong Sikh outpost on a mound near the village of Chilianwála. A few rounds from the horse-artillery, backed by the swift advance of the 24th Foot, sent the enemy flying without their tents. From this mound the British General could descry the whole of Sher Singh's army drawn out for battle two or three miles off; their right thrown forward into the jungle at Fathi-Shah-ke-Chauk, their centre massed about the village of Chilianwála, their left hugging the higher ground at Rasúl, whereon stood their tents, now clearly visible beyond the belt of dark forest.

After a brief halt the British columns again moved forward, but not far; Lord Gough had given up his plan of the night

* Arnold; Marshman; Trotter.

† "Feeling that I was perfectly competent effectually to overthrow Sher Singh's army," are the words of his own despatch of January 16, 1849.

before—a plan which Sher Singh had already thwarted by bringing forward his own right. The Sikh line, in truth, overlapped ours on both flanks. To turn either its right or its left would be a work of time, and the day was already waning. So about one o'clock the advancing troops were again halted, and the camp-colourmen moved out to take up ground for that night's encampment. While our weary soldiers were waiting with piled arms the order to fall out, some shot from the enemy's advanced guns dropped among the skirmishers in front of the halted line. Provoked by this sudden challenge, Gough at once ordered his heavy guns, commanded by Horsford, to the front of Chilianwála. Their fire was answered by one Sikh battery after another, until the whole jungle seemed alive with the murderous din. For an hour or more the battle of the guns, both light and heavy, roared with unflagging fury; our own gunners being guided in their aim only by the smoke and flashes from different parts of the jungle in their front.*

It was now nearly three o'clock of a winter afternoon. Of three courses open to him, Gough chose that which best suited his fiery, fearless spirit, if not indeed the only course which circumstances enjoined. To withdraw his troops out of range was more than he or almost any English leader could have brooked. To encamp where he stood might expose his troops to all the hazards of a night attack, on ground of which very little was known. It remained only to continue the fight thus opened at so late an hour. As soon as the enemy's fire seemed to slacken, Gough ordered his infantry to advance with their respective batteries, covered by cavalry at either flank, against the left and centre of the Sikh line. The left, or Campbell's division, the first to receive the order, was the first engaged. Its two brigades, under Hoggan and Pennycuick, at once sprang forward with quick strides over the thorn-covered ground on which no infantry could keep its regular two-deep line for many paces together. Campbell himself accompanied Hoggan's, or the left brigade, which, firing as it went on and supported by a light field-battery, soon passed the left of Chilianwála, charged up to the batteries in front, drove the Sikhs back with heavy slaughter, and then, wheeling to the right, speedily recovered the ground which the less fortunate soldiers of the right brigade had meanwhile won

* There is some reason to believe that the Sikh guns opened fire against the orders of Sher Singh, who would have let Gough encamp in order to attack him during the night.

and lost. Commanded by their own general to advance without firing,* the luckless 24th Foot had rushed on with unloaded muskets into the thickening jungle at a pace which soon left their native comrades of the 25th and 45th Sepoys in the rear. The light field-pieces which ought to have flanked their advance had been unaccountably taken elsewhither. After scrambling through a mile of jungle, Brookes's young soldiers rushed pell-mell at the guns of a Sikh battery planted on the open beyond. The guns were taken and spiked, but the halt thus occasioned was to cost the victors dear. The scattered enemy soon took heart to renew the fight with so small a body of assailants. Standing there, still breathless and disordered, among the captured guns, their brigadier, colonel, and one major already fallen, their thinned and broken ranks raked afresh by a murderous shower of grape and bullets from the surrounding thickets, the brave but raw young soldiers of the 24th, after a brief struggle at close quarters, turned and ran in helpless confusion, which soon swept away the two native regiments coming up to their aid. Out of all that strong brigade only a few companies of the 45th Sepoys rallied in time to share the last successes won by Hoggan's heroes of the 61st Foot, the 36th and 46th Native Infantry. Of the broken remnants of the 24th Foot, those who escaped the matchlock-fire and the sabres of pursuing horsemen found shelter within the walls of Chilianwála. Penny's reserve brigade, ordered to fill up the gap thus left in the front line, missed its way in the jungle, and presently found itself in rear of Gilbert's, or the right division of foot. Fortunately, Hoggan's brigade proved equal to the new demand upon its pluck and prowess; and when evening gloomed upon the field, the enemy had been driven back from their twice-taken guns.†

By this time the 24th Foot, cut down to half its former strength, with two-thirds of its officers slain or wounded, had reformed its shattered ranks, and marched forward to its old place in the front.‡ Meanwhile Sir Joseph Thackwell had not kept his cavalry unemployed. White's brigade on the left of the line, supported by Brind's three troops of horse-artillery, had been ordered to check

* This statement is confirmed by Captain Lawrence-Archer, in his "Commentaries on the Punjab Campaign." As a subaltern doing duty with the 24th, he himself heard General Campbell say, as he rode up, "There must be no firing; the bayonet must do the work." And others heard the same order given.

† Thackwell; Lawrence-Archer; Trotter; Official Despatches.

‡ Lawrence-Archer. It was Captain Archer who first rallied his own company at the village.

the movements of a large body of horse and foot under Autar Singh against our left. Erelong the 5th Bengal Cavalry, and Unett's squadron of the invincible 3rd Dragoons were launched upon the Sikh horse. Galled by a bitter matchlock-fire, the 5th Cavalry, once famed for daring, wavered, turned, and fled with a speed which no prayers or threats of their indignant officers could check. But Unett's troopers rode on as if nothing had happened, dashed like a torrent through the opposing ranks, and passed for some anxious minutes out of sight. Surrounded by foes and stormed upon by a Sikh battery, they turned about at last, and once more cut their way through a cloud of angry Ghorcharhas at the cost of nearly forty men killed or wounded. It was one of those brilliant, if bootless, feats which Englishmen are wont to remember with a glow of pardonable pride.

Before the enemy's guns had done playing on the British left, White's cavalry and Brind's guns were ordered by Lord Gough to reinforce his right. Here also there had been hard fighting, checkered by unforeseen disaster. The right attack of infantry, under Sir Walter Gilbert, was opened by his left or Mountain's brigade. Advancing through heavy brushwood under a crashing fire, the men of the 29th Foot showed their native comrades the way into the Sikh intrenchments. Not without heavy loss did this brigade succeed in routing its opponents and storming the batteries in its front. Broken by the advance through so much jungle, scattered in its headlong rush among the guns, outflanked and isolated by the retreat of Pennycuick's brigade, the 56th Native Infantry was shivered into flying fragments by repeated onsets of the Sikh cavalry. Its leader mortally hurt, six officers killed, three hundred and sixteen men slain, wounded, or missing, the two colours lost or captured, the wrecks of this regiment afterwards turned up in rear of Godby's brigade. Little less fearful was the loss inflicted on the 30th Sepoys, who got thrown into sad disorder while engaged in spiking the enemy's guns. This regiment also lost one of its colours, but managed ultimately to hold its ground beside the firm-paced warriors of the 29th Foot, two hundred of whom had bled or fallen by the way.

Meanwhile the right brigade under Godby had been doing soldierly service against formidable odds. With the steadiness of veterans the 2nd Europeans swept forward through the thorny jungle, in well kept, if not always two-deep, line. On their left marched the 31st and 70th Native Infantry. Under a murderous fire these regiments pressed on towards a more open part of the

jungle, where a long line of Sikh foot and guns seemed resolute to meet their charge. In another moment the enemy, quailing before that firm array of levelled bayonets, fell back behind the bushes, still keeping up a scattered fire. Suddenly a fresh fire was opened on Godby's rear. Outflanked on both sides, with large bodies of horse and foot barring its retreat, the brigade had to fight its way out of the danger as it best could, with the help of Dawes's ever-ready guns. The Sepoys formed square, but the 2nd Europeans, simply turning to the right about, marched down rear rank in front to grapple with their new assailants. A timely salvo from Dawes's guns cooled the courage of the Sikh horsemen, while a well-aimed volley from Colonel Steel's men saved the guns at a critical moment, and scattered the white-clad Sikh foot in headlong flight back to their own line. The few who lagged behind, or still held their ground, were swept down in one triumphant charge, and once more the brigade could move forward to its proper front. Erelong Godby's soldiers had more than recovered their lost ground, had driven their opponents everywhere off the field, and taken every gun that crossed their path. All this was accomplished after three hours' steady fighting at a cost comparatively small; the Europeans losing about seventy men out of six hundred. But for the steady front they showed throughout, and the timely movements of Dawes's gunners, that loss would have been far heavier.

But how had this brigade been caught as it were between two fires? Unhappily the explanation was but too clear. Led by an old colonel who could hardly mount his horse, the right brigade of cavalry, four regiments strong, got entangled in the brushwood, and crowded leftwards in front of its own guns, and even of Steel's right companies. Just as the line halted to recover its trim, Brigadier Pope was badly wounded by a Sikh trooper, one of a large body hanging about the front. Amidst the confusion thus caused in his own regiment, the 6th Bengal Cavalry, some of Huish's horse-artillerymen shouted to the squadrons before them to wheel aside and give their guns room to play. At the same moment Pope seems to have ordered his cavalry to take ground to their right. Of a sudden the whole line turned about, an order to that effect having been clearly heard by some men of the left centre regiment, the 14th Dragoons. Who gave the word "threes about" has never been ascertained. As the line retired, its pace quickened into a gallop; the rivalry of the horses acting in concert with the growing panic of their riders, now closely followed by a few hundred derisive Ghorcharhas, drunk, it was said, with

bhang. Crowding together in their headlong flight, the Dragoons rode right through Christie's and Huish's batteries, parting the guns from their horses, disabling gunners, upsetting tumbrils, and carrying ruin and dismay far into our rear, even among the doolies of the wounded and the field-furniture of the medical staff. Four guns were abandoned to the foe; the gallant Major Christie was cut down with many of his own and Huish's men; and but for the bushes that gave passing shelter many more would have shared the same fate. Young Cureton, son of him who fell at Rámnagar, was borne away by his unmanageable horse to death in the hostile ranks. Major Ekins, deputy adjutant-general, perished in a fruitless effort to rally the runaways. Not till Lane's gunners had poured some rounds of grape into the pursuers, while a wing of the 9th Lancers, getting clear of the flying mass, once more turned their faces to the battle, were the bold Ghorcharhas daunted into a leisurely retreat. Shortly afterwards the Lancers and a wing of the 6th Cavalry did good service in aiding Lane's troop of horse-artillery to drive back a large body of horse and foot which threatened the extreme right of their line. Later yet, Brind's horse-artillery galloped up from the extreme left to crown the discomfiture of the Sikhs on the opposite flank.*

It was already sunset when Lord Gough rode down the halted line of his weary, war-broken, yet still victorious troops. The Sikhs had at length been fairly beaten. Their left was known to be in full retreat upon the Jhilam. Some forty of their guns had fallen into the victors' hands. Pursuit in the dark was useless over such ground, even if our men had been less tired and famished than they were. It only remained to hold the ground they had won, a mile beyond the village of Chilianwála. In spite of General Campbell's counsel, his brave old Chief would not hear at first of falling back ever so little for the sake of getting water and protecting his rear. "What! leave my wounded to be cut up? Never!" was the reply that rushed at once to his lips. His own opinion was strongly seconded by Sir Henry Lawrence, who had joined his camp in time to carry orders for him during the fight. But Campbell's arguments prevailed at last over the bolder and more generous counsels, and the troops crawled back in the deepening darkness to the neighbourhood of Chilianwála.†

It was pitch dark before Gilbert's division had taken its place in

* Thackwell; Sandford; Lawrence-Archer; Trotter.

† Thackwell; Sandford; Trotter.

the new line. That night few regiments had aught to allay their hunger or to shelter them from the chilling rain which erelong began falling fast and steadily. It was some hours before many of the wounded in the field-hospital could get a drop of water, while the surgeons and their helpers were all too few for the work required of them. But lying about the deserted battle-field were other wounded whose sufferings no surgeon was ever to relieve. Parties of Sikh soldiers and their camp-followers stole down in the darkness, carried off most of the captured guns, and murdered every man they found alive. Only a few who had strength enough to crawl under the bushes escaped the cruel search. Had Gough left but a regiment or two of his irregular horse to guard the ground so hardly won, this twofold mishap had never been recorded, for the beaten enemy had already begun to seek safety beyond the Jhilam. Deprived of two-thirds of their guns, the whole Sikh army would either have had to flee at once across the river, or have else been driven with heavy slaughter from the heights of Rasúl.*

After a night of hardship, anxiety, and confusion, returning daylight found our troops drawn up again in fighting order, ready, in spite of thinned numbers, long fasting, and the steady rain, to follow up their hard-won successes of the day before. But White's cavalry had by this time discovered the unfortunate issues of the past night, and Gough could see for himself the long lines of Sikh tents still crowning their old ridge, some three or four miles in his own front. So, instead of advancing, a camp was formed; tents were pitched as they came up; and most of the tired soldiers slept soundly through several hours of a wet, stormy, altogether dismal day. Others were employed in searching for the wounded, in bringing in and burying the dead. The brave chaplain, Mr. Whiting, who on the 13th had tried to rally some of the retreating troopers, found heavy work upon his hands during the two or three cheerless days that followed after the battle. In one tent alone thirteen officers of the 24th Foot lay dead. These were buried together in one grave. To another were consigned the rest of the English officers, except Major Christie, who was buried in the same grave with his own men, in compliance with the prayer of their surviving comrades. In the largest trench of all lay the remains of about two hundred British soldiers. The victory, such as it was, had indeed been bought at a cruel price. In about three hours' time thirty-nine officers, English and Native, fifty-three

* Thackwell; Sandford; Trotter.

sergeants or havildars, five hundred and eleven privates, had fallen dead; a hundred men and four sergeants were missing, very few of whom returned alive; while the list of wounded came up to ninety-four officers, one warrant officer, ninety sergeants or havildars, fourteen hundred and sixty-six rank and file. Besides a loss unequalled even in the battles on the Satlaj, four guns and several colours remained in the enemy's hands. Out of all the guns our troops had taken, twelve only had been brought into camp; the rest being fated to do further mischief on a field fraught with far more credit to our arms.

That Sher Singh was defeated there can be no reasonable doubt. In spite of all miscarriages, our troops had driven him with heavy slaughter from the field of his own choosing. Thanks, in part to the opening fire of Horsford's eighteen-pounders, partly also to the bold and skilful handling of all the lighter batteries, the Sikh loss must have more than doubled ours. Nowhere else, save perhaps at Sobráon, had Gough himself seen "so many of an enemy's slain upon the same space." Two hours more of daylight, and the rout of Sobráon would have been renewed upon the old battle ground of Porus and Alexander. As it happened, however, the victory remained so incomplete that Sher Singh hardly bettered his opponent's teaching on a former occasion, when from the heights of Rasúl he fired that evening a royal salute in honour of his own success. To his soldiers a fight, which ended in an orderly retreat before a crippled foe, to the lines they had left that morning might well seem a victory, when that foe was their old antagonist of the Satlaj campaign.

CHAPTER VI.

CONQUEST OF THE PANJÁB.

When the three days' rain, brought on by the cannonade of the 13th of January, had done falling on the gloom-stricken camp, Lord Gough employed his soldiers in throwing up entrenchments and clearing away the jungle in their front. A few days after the battle, Chatar Singh followed the bulk of his own troops into his son's camp. About the same time Iláhi Baksh, the Sikh commandant of artillery, brought himself and much useful information over to the British side. Lord Gough, whose first thought had been to fall back on Dingi, as nearer his true base, now resolved to await at Chilianwála the reinforcements that would soon be coming from Lahór, Rámnagar, and Multán. Meanwhile the two armies lay looking at each other, strengthening their lines by the free use of spade and pickaxe, and exchanging rough compliments with each other's outposts. Sher Singh also renewed the overtures which, two days after the action of Rámnagar, he had made in vain. Now, as before, Lord Dalhousie declined to treat with "rebels" on belligerent terms. Chatar Singh's prisoners, George Lawrence, Herbert and Bowie, who had been sent on parole into Gough's camp, were bidden to tell the Sikh leaders that nothing short of absolute surrender would satisfy the Governor-General. If any harm befell their English captives, on their heads it should lie.

On the 26th of January a grand salute from the heavy guns announced to our expectant soldiers the welcome tidings of the fall of Multán. As soon as this event became known to Sher Singh, he began a series of movements towards his left, which Gough met by throwing up a redoubt armed with field-pieces beyond the right of his line.

That the incomplete and blood-stained victory of Chilianwála should call forth a cry of grief, resentment, even of panic-fear from many parts of India, will surprise no reader of these pages. Our countrymen in India are naturally prone to oscillate between

the extremes of wild alarm and wild exultation. In many an Anglo-Indian journal Gough was plentifully abused for an excess of rashness which had imperilled our Indian Empire, and involved a terrible, a causeless waste of precious lives. At his door was laid every blunder of that eventful day. Every story which ill-will, idleness, or misunderstanding had started to his disparagement, was caught up, repeated, passed on with new embellishments, by a host of careless or unfriendly critics. In England the panic was even greater, the unfair comments yet more unfair. On all sides rose the cry of an empire at stake. From the old Duke of Wellington down to the pettiest scribbler, rose one fierce demand for the displacement of Lord Gough by Sir Charles Napier. The grey-haired hero of a dozen victories, whose term of command had lately been extended to another year, was to be forthwith set aside, because his last battle, begun too late in the day, had been marked by unwonted bloodshed, unrelieved by the glory of a striking success. It was gravely reported that a shot which fell too near him had brought on the fight which his cooler judgement would have deferred. They who said so forgot that, being so near the enemy, he could not well draw back from the position he had too incautiously taken up. They forgot, or failed to see, that for the worst disasters of that bloody field some of his captains were alone to blame; that Gough could hardly be held answerable for the advance of infantry with unloaded muskets,* or for the sudden retreat of four good cavalry regiments before a few hundred Ghorcharhas, half-dazed with their favourite drug.

Much was said about the folly of throwing good troops into so dense a jungle, as if Lord Gough had brought the enemy to bay on ground of his own selecting, or as if fighting in a jungle must needs prove more favourable to the defence alone. Undoubtedly the field was better suited to irregular horsemen than to regular dragoons. But the noble 3rd Dragoons made no more account of wooded than of open country; nor was it Gough's fault if some of his native cavalry feared to try their sabres against the sharp cutting Sikh talwár, or if Pope's brigade under awkward handling threw the right of his line into utter confusion, and brought Gilbert's division into serious danger. In the field of war

* Two days after the battle, the present writer met two or three men of the 61st Queen's, who declared that they also had been ordered to advance without firing. "But we didn't mind the order," they said; "we kept up a steady file fire and so carried everything before us." By firing steadily and keeping a firm front the 2nd Europeans saved themselves from terrible losses,

the best laid plans of the most cunning strategist may be baffled by the tactical blunders of those who carry them into effect. Lord Gough was neither a bad strategist nor, in spite of his Irish blood, a mere hot-headed leader of a charge in line. It was impossible for any one commander to overlook the movements of all his troops on a field where one regiment knew nothing of what was happening on its own flank. That Gough's ignorance of the enemy's true whereabouts drew him too far in front of Dingi on the 13th, and thus compelled him to accept the enemy's challenge at a late hour of a day too soon, was indeed a misfortune for which his own rashness must share the blame with the inefficiency of his scouting department. Nor can he be acquitted of a serious oversight in leaving the battlefield unguarded during the night by at least a few squadrons of irregular horse. But his own feeling of thorough competence to beat Sher Singh was justified not only by the brilliant deeds of some of his batteries and brigades, but still more by the after admissions of the Sikhs themselves, touching the heaviness of their losses, and by the actual retreat that night of Sher Singh with half his army across the Jhilam.

In the Chief's camp, however, the unfriendly critics were not many. After the first few days of gloom and wet weather the spirits of his troops regained their former buoyancy. If they sometimes grumbled at the forced inaction, at the need for intrenching themselves against a beaten foe, they often talked good humouredly about the past, or turned with cheery confidence to the future. With unshaken pride in their old leader, who, if he sometimes "put his foot in it," was pretty sure to get it out again, they counted on taking speedy and full revenge for the mishaps and the "butcher's bill" of Chilianwála. Nor was their trust to prove misplaced now. Hardly had the first news of the battle on the 13th of January begun to set all England aghast, when Lord Gough won the decisive, the well-nigh bloodless victory of Gujarát. On the 11th of February the Sikh army drew out in front of its own lines, as if challenging the English to another fight. Next morning the Sikh tents had vanished from the heights of Rasúl. A scouting party under General Gilbert soon brought back word that the Sikh intrenchments had been abandoned. Sher Singh, in fact, had stolen a march upon his opponents. On the night of the 11th his main body had quietly moved off, bag and baggage, towards the Purán Pass, commanding the road from Rámnagar to the town of Jhilam. On

the 13th the whole Sikh army again marched unmolested, undiscovered, round our right flank and rear towards the Chináb at Wazirábád. With a sudden boldness that nearly gained its end, Sher Singh sought to throw himself across that river and even to swoop down upon Lahór while the English were yet wondering which way he had gone.

Want of provisions, the difficulty of getting away from Rasúl in the event of its being turned by the enemy, the hope of intercepting the Multán columns in detail, the chance of overpowering the weak garrison of Lahór, were all likely reasons for abandoning a post whose great strength might have made its capture a tough business even for the bravest troops. Some persons even predicted that, if Sher Singh once got across the Chináb, he would attempt by forced marches to reach Delhi; the sack thereof being held out to his troops as a rich reward for all perils encountered by the way.

On the 14th of February Gough learned for certain that Sher Singh had halted his army about Gujarát, a fair-sized town near the right bank of the Chináb, a little above the fords of Wazirábád. The Sikhs were encamped on ground memorable in their eyes for battles won by the Khálsa in former days. Their attempt to cross the river was happily forestalled by the recent rains and by the timely despatch of a small brigade from Rámnagar, where General Whish with a Bengal division was already encamped on his way to reinforce Lord Gough. At Lahór itself the new commandant, Brigadier Godby, was taking all soldierly precautions against possible attack; while Markham's brigade kept watch over the fords around Rámnagar.

Meanwhile, in Gough's camp all hearts were beating strongly with exultant hopes. His soldiers felt, as Cromwell did on a like occasion, that the Lord had delivered the enemy into their hands. A difficulty about baggage camels baulked Gough's attempt to leave Chilianwála on the 14th. Next morning, however, the army made a long hot march back to their old camping-ground at Lasúri, which commanded the roads to Rámnagar and Wazirábád. Two short marches in the next two days brought them to Kúnja, about six miles from Gujarát. Here they were joined by two of Hervey's regiments from Multán. Another march of four miles or so was followed on the 19th by a day's halt, during which Brigadier Dundas came into camp with two fine English regiments, hurried on at the last by a peremptory command from Lord Gough. On the 20th the whole of General Whish's division,

including Markham's brigade, fell into line with the main army about Shádiwál, three miles from the camp of Sher Singh, which lay crescentwise in front of Gujarát; its right flank and front covered by a deep but dry *nallah*, the Dwára, which wound down towards Shádiwál; its left by a deep but narrow stream flowing into the Chináb, along our right, from the eastern side of the town.*

It was a cool bright morning, the larks singing blithely in mid-air, when the British line, about twenty-three thousand strong, with ninety guns, of which eighteen were heavy, marched forward in columns of brigade at deploying distance over a fair expanse of level country green with young corn. The winding Dwára cut the advancing host in two; Gough himself leading his right wing against the enemy's centre, so as to enable his own left under Thackwell to cross the *nallah* as it bent along Thackwell's front, and double the Sikh right back upon the part which he himself aimed at breaking. Along the right of the *nallah* marched the heavy batteries of Day and Horsford, drawn half by elephants, half by bullocks. Next on the right strode Gilbert's infantry of the left, or Mountain's, and the right, now Penny's brigade, flanked by Dawes's battery and Fordyce's nine-pounder troop. Further to the right came the first or Hervey's brigade of General Whish's division; the second under Markham being held back a few hundred yards in the right rear. With these brigades moved Anderson's and Mackenzie's six-pounder troops. The cavalry brigades of Hearsey and Lockwood, aided by Warner's troop of horse-artillery, guarded the extreme right; Lane's and Kinleside's batteries under Colonel Brind bringing up the rear. Left of the Dwára marched Campbell's brigades of foot, under McLeod and Carnegie, flanked by Ludlow's and Robertson's nine-pounders. On their left moved the four regiments of Brigadier Dundas, with the six-pounder troops of Blood and Turnbull; their left flank covered by White's cavalry brigade and the horse-artillery of Duncan and Huish. A few regiments of horse and foot, with the Bombay light field-batteries, guarded the baggage in the rear.

After marching about two miles "with the precision"—says Gough—"of a parade movement," the infantry halted to form line, the skirmishers and light batteries went to the front, and the eighteen-pounders prepared to return the fire now opened from

* Thackwell; Sandford; Trotter; Official Despatches. Gough's right rested on the Chináb.

batteries a thousand yards off. Lord Gough had for once resolved to give his powerful artillery fair play. While his infantry lay down in ordered line, the British batteries, light and heavy, moved forward to their posts in front, taking fresh ground from time to time, as circumstances led them on. For two hours and a half the roar of battling guns rent the smoke-laden air. Manfully, with amazing steadiness, did the Sikh gunners fight their sixty pieces of cannon, in truth of aim nearly equalling, in quickness of fire surpassing, the renowned artillerymen of Bengal and Bombay.* But the advantage in numbers and weight of metal lay with Lord Gough, and that advantage he would not be tempted to throw away with many hours of daylight to befriend him. As the long British line crept forward, the fire on both sides still raged with unflagging fury. Again the infantry lay down to avoid the deadly hail of grape and round shot which fell thick among the batteries engaged in front. Fordyce's troop, pushed some way before the rest, had to fall back twice for fresh horses, ammunition, and even men. Anderson's gunners were roughly handled, and their brave commander lost his life. On the left centre Robertson's and Ludlow's batteries poured in a cruelly raking fire on bodies of Sikh foot sheltering beneath the banks of the Dwára. A like manœuvre was accomplished by Lane and Kinleside against some batteries on the Sikh left. Meanwhile our heavy guns kept moving forward from point to point with an ease and quickness wonderful to behold. Every shot from those eighteen-pounders seemed to tell. Every minute the inevitable end drew nearer as men and horses fell fast in bloody heaps amid shattered tumbrils and disabled guns.

Still the Sikhs fought on with the hardihood of men more used to conquer than to yield. If the guns they loved were fast failing them, the flower of their 50,000 troops, the old Khálsa infantry, and the well-trained Bannu regiments, remained comparatively unbroken. Clouds of Sikh horse on either flank still forced their opponents to keep good watch against their efforts to pass round our line. Time after time their manœuvres on Gough's right were spoiled by the fire of Warner's guns and the quick counter-movements of Hearsey's and Lockwood's horse. Once a stray party of Ghorcharhas, getting round the British rear, made a bold and desperate dash at the place where Gough himself was posted

* The Sikh gunners fired about three shots to our two, stopping the vents with sandbags instead of thumbs. Their round shot of hammered iron were heavier and travelled further than our cast-iron balls of the same nominal calibre.

beside some of the heavy guns. But a timely charge by his escort, under Lieutenant Stannus, ended almost in the annihilation of that daring band. On the British left Duncan's and Huish's gunners kept up a spirited fire on the Sikh and Afghán cavalry swarming in their front. Some 1,800 Afghán horse, led by Akram Khán, a son of Dost Mohammad, persisted in trying to turn Thackwell's flank. But a brilliant charge of Malcolm's Sind horse, supported by the 9th Lancers, scattered the assailants with heavy loss, and a general advance of the cavalry and guns on that side completed the overthrow of the Sikh right.

During the height of the cannonade the British infantry, skirmishers excepted, had not fired a shot. But at length, from a good-sized village called Kálrah, 200 yards in front of Penny's brigade, a heavy matchlock-fire was opened on a party of foot ordered up to take possession of what had seemed an empty post. It proved in fact the key of the Sikh position. Flanked in rear by Sikh batteries, this village was guarded by a deep pool in front, while two regiments of picked troops stood within its loop-holed walls. Against this new obstacle the 2nd Europeans, supported by the 31st and 70th Sepoys, moved forward as steadily as on parade. A shattering fire from the village and the battery beyond laid many a brave man low. But nothing could stay the onset of Steel's resolute warriors. In a few minutes the left wing had cleared the village of all living defenders, who fell by scores in every corner, or were shot down in mid-flight by the companies waiting for them outside. No quarter was asked or given, for the victors thought only of their wounded comrades massacred on the field of Chilianwála. Meanwhile, the right wing of this regiment had lain down in halted line to avoid the storms of grapeshot poured in from a battery 200 yards off. For some anxious minutes the 2nd Europeans felt the full fury of a fire which Fordyce's gunners, once more withdrawn in quest of ammunition, could not return. Erelong, however, the missing troop galloped up to their rescue. After a few well-delivered rounds from their guns, the enemy's fire slackened and then ceased. By that time the 31st and 70th Sepoys had marched up to their appointed places, and presently the long line of Sikh horse and foot in their front wavered and broke into retreating masses as the whole British army swept onwards over a breadth of five miles to finish that morning's work.

Little less brilliant had been the advance of Hervey's brigade against the smaller village of Chota Kálrah; the 10th Foot add-

ing one more successful charge to the feats elsewhere achieved under the able leading of Colonel Franks. After that, little more was left for the infantry to do. The great Sikh army, at least 50,000 strong,* was turned in ever-quickening flight from the field of its own choosing, the last it was ever fated to dispute with an English foe. Huge was the litter of guns, tumbrils, ammunition, stores, cattle, camp-furniture, with Sikhs dead or wounded, that strewed the way of the pursuers for several miles. When the infantry halted beyond Gujarát, the cavalry and horse-artillery carried on the chase from either flank; following up their prey with murderous keenness, sweeping the masses down with grape, scattering them with frequent charges, and bearing off their few remaining guns. When the horse-artillery gave in, the cavalry kept up the chase alone, never drawing rein for fourteen miles, and sabring or shooting down horse and foot at every turn. Nothing but an express command from Gough prevented Thackwell from passing the night on the ground where he had halted in the hope of renewing the chase on the morrow.†

Before sunset of February 21, fifty-six guns, with a great many tumbrils, standards, piles of ammunition, and the whole standing camp by the Bará-Dari, a park on the left of Gujarát, had fallen into the victors' hands. Within the town itself some hundreds of Sikhs were taken prisoners. Of the whole Sikh loss in men no reckoning was ever taken, but the dead alone must have amounted to several thousands. Many hundreds of the brave Sikh gunners fell beside their guns. More than 200 bodies were afterwards found in the village of Kálrah alone. So dreadful had been the British fire that every ball, said the Sikhs themselves, had found a Singh. On our own side this crowning victory had cost no more than 96 slain and 711 wounded. Among the dead were only 6 officers and as many sergeants, while 38 officers and 40 sergeants or havildars were more or less hurt. One division of infantry, that of Campbell, never fired a shot. More than half the entire loss fell to the share of Penny's brigade and Fordyce's troop of horse-artillery, while the returns for Hervey's brigade, including the troops of Anderson and Mackenzie, showed a total of 200.‡

Such was the issue of a fight which, according to Sikh predictions, was to have ended far otherwise. A few days before the battle Sher Singh had taken Major George Lawrence up to the

* Lord Gough's estimate was 60,000, but that was probably above the mark.

† Thackwell; Sandford; Trotter; Official Despatches.

‡ Out of a total strength of about 550 the 2nd Europeans lost 152.

roof of a house in Gujarát. Pointing to the splendid army drawn out on the plain beyond, he asked his prisoner what chance our troops could hope for against the onset of so superb a force. "Two hundred thousand such as these," was the ready answer, "will avail you nothing in the day of battle against our troops." On another occasion the Sikh leader expressed his surprise that the enemy did not make more use of their splendid artillery, instead of trusting so much to their infantry, of whom his soldiers had far less fear.* Now, however, Sher Singh had played his last stake and lost everything save honour. The very thing which he had most dreaded, Gough had done at last. Had Thackwell's cavalry been free to bivouac where they halted, their advance on the morrow might have forestalled the blow delivered some days later by Sir Walter Gilbert. As things were, however, the hunt was followed up with a success that atoned for all mistakes. Early on the 22nd, while Campbell's infantry and Bradford's horse prepared to scour the country towards Bimbar in the north, and towards the hills on the west of Gujarát, Gilbert himself marched off with a picked force of all arms, about 8,000 strong, along the road that led to the Jhilam through the Purán Pass. In three days his sturdy soldiers had made their way by double marches, in bad weather, over much rough ground, to the banks of the swift-flowing Jhilam, the "storied Hydaspes" of Horatian song.† Across the river, at Naurangabad, they could see the wrecks of Sher Singh's army, with nine or ten guns, ready, as it seemed, to dispute their passage. But the sight of his pursuers and the approach of Steinbach's Kashmiris towards his flank, hastened the Sikh leader's retreat from his strong position on the banks of a broad, deep, many-branching stream. By February 27 the "Flying General," renowned of yore for many feats of horsemanship, had led his cavalry towards Rhotás in hot chase of a nimble foe. His infantry followed as well as they could.

On the 2nd of March Penny's brigade had passed out of the hills where frowned the stately, picturesque fortress of Rhotás. From this time parties of Sikhs began coming in almost daily, while their leaders sought to ascertain the exact meaning of Lord Dalhousie's demands for an unconditional surrender.‡ On again through the long winding gorges of the Bakriála Pass hurried the "Flying General" with his mounted troops, closely followed by Penny's brigade. On the 8th Sher Singh, most of whose prisoners

* G. Lawrence.

† "Quæ loca fabulosus Lambit Hydaspes."

‡ Sir G. Lawrence.

had been given up two days before, came himself into Gilbert's camp to treat for his own surrender. Two days later, many hundreds of Kánh Singh's followers laid down their arms before the troops encamped by the old Buddhist *tope* of Manikyála. Many an English heart ached in sympathy with the grief of many a long-bearded Khálsa warrior, as each in turn stood wistful, wavering, before the pile of swords, matchlocks, shields, spears and camel-guns, on which his own arms would next be thrown. Having parted at length with his dearest treasures, such an one would turn slowly away, unmindful of the proffered rupee to which he was entitled; and muttering with tearful eyes, "My work is done now," wander off to his own home.*

At Hurmak, on the 11th and two following days, thousands of Sikhs came trooping in to lay down their arms and give up their cannon. Among the latter were three of the guns lost by our men at Chilianwála; the fourth having been recovered on the 21st of February. Great was the joy of the English gunners at this event. Here also many of the Sikh Sardárs made their submission, while Sher Singh went away to win the rest over to a like frame of mind in their camp on the uplands of Ráwal-Pindi. Thither on the 14th marched General Gilbert. The sight of his troops determined the still reluctant chiefs. It had been a critical moment when Sher and Chatar Singh, with Major Lawrence between them, walked for the last time along the ranks of an army still numbering twelve thousand men, who, chafing under their reverses, waxed loud in abuse of the leaders who, they declared, had sold them to the Farangi. Resistance to their fate, however, seemed hopeless, now that their chiefs had become of one mind. In the presence of Gilbert's chief officers the Sikh Sardárs yielded up their swords, their followers moodily laying or flinging down their arms at the place appointed. The great Sikh army was now no more. Gilbert's steady pursuit had gathered up the harvest left unreaped by the victors of Gujarát. Forty-one guns, a great many camel-pieces, and more than sixteen thousand stand of arms proclaimed the fulness of a triumph which, next to Gilbert and his tireless soldiers, was owing partly to Colonel Steinbach's tardy support, and still more to the boldness with which Major James

* "Méré kám hogayá." The touching words spoken by Othello (Act III. Scene 3), "O now for ever farewell the tranquil mind"—down to "Othello's occupation's gone"—afford a perfect parallel to the feelings and the very words of these poor fellows, noble even in defeat.

Abbott held his Musalman levies together in the hills behind Sher Singh.*

Gilbert's work was not quite over yet. In his General Order of the 1st of March Lord Dalhousie had avowed his purpose of carrying on the war "to the entire defeat and dispersion of all who are in arms against us, whether Sikhs or Afgháns." Starting on the 15th from Ráwal-Pindi, Sir Walter hurried on after the flying Afgháns with a speed that brought him in two days to Atak on the Indus, just in time to behold the enemy employed in burning the bridge of boats. A few rounds from Fordyce's guns prevented the Afgháns from finishing their work. A few hours later came up the Bengal infantry, after a forced march of fifty-six miles in thirty-four hours, halts included. Halting next day to repair the bridge, Gilbert on the 19th led his worn horses and footsore men through the windings of the Ghidar-Galli in quest of the prey which escaped him only by headlong flight into the stony wilds of the Khaibar. Knocking five marches into three, his Bengal troops reached Pesháwar on the 21st, halting in sight of the yet smoking ruins of the British Residency and the Sikh cantonments outside the city. But for the necessary delay in crossing the rock-bound Indus, the prey so closely hunted might have been caught at last. If the Afridis of the hills had only let themselves be bribed into closing the Khaibar, as the men of Pesháwar had closed their gates against the flying Afgháns, very few of Akram Khán's band would have returned to Kábul. As it was, some thousands of Dost Mohammad's best troops had fled like frightened deer back into their own hills, after a hunt of twenty-seven days through a wild and difficult country, furrowed by ravines and rivers, or blocked by rugged mountain ranges through which the hunters sometimes had to hew out their slow way. And as if to enhance the value of this brilliant lesson in the art of hunting down a beaten foe, Gilbert's troops had been exposed to few other hardships than the making of forced marches over rough ground, in stormy weather or beneath a broiling sun. Their food, their tents, their baggage, the proverbial stumbling-blocks of Eastern warfare, very seldom lagged far behind; no matter how long the march or how rough the road.

The last armed foe thus driven from the field, Lord Dalhousie lost not a moment in setting men's minds at rest concerning the future of the Panjáb. On the 30th of March he issued from his camp at Firózpur the proclamation which announced to all India

* Sandford; Sir G. Lawrence; Trotter.

the final overthrow of Sikh rule throughout the land of the Five Rivers. In breach of Lord Hardinge's merciful treaty, the Sikh people and most of their chiefs had crowned all their lighter offences by murdering or imprisoning British officers, rising against the rule of their own accepting, and waging "a fierce and bloody war for the proclaimed purpose of destroying the British and their power." As bound to provide for its own safety and to guard the interests of its own subjects, the Government of India was now resolved "on the entire subjection of a people whom their own government has long been unable to control, and whom no punishment can deter from violence, no acts of friendship conciliate to peace." The dethroned Mahárája would be treated with all respect and honour; the better behaved chiefs would retain their rank and property, while the lands and property of all who had risen against us would be confiscated to the State. Every man of whatever creed would be allowed the free exercise of his religion, checked only by a just regard for the rights of his neighbours. Every strong place not held by British troops would be utterly dismantled. Lastly, the people were warned to submit themselves to a government mild enough towards the well-behaved, but very stern at need to the disaffected.

Such was the burthen of a manifesto which left our own countrymen little room for cavilling at the justice of a measure whose expediency was to be proved beyond question by after events. In one of those clear, exhaustive minutes for which Dalhousie was to gain a special renown, the whole case of the late war and his reasons for annexing the Panjáb were set forth for the information of the Secret Committee at the India House. A stronger defence of the annexation, as viewed from the standpoint of a statesman rather than a moralist, it would be hard to conceive. The Governor-General did but re-echo the general voice of his countrymen, and perhaps of the civilized world, when he spoke of Sikh turbulence as leaving him no choice between a thorough conquest and perpetual war. After crushing a foe who had "twice already rudely shaken our power in India," the natives of India would at once suspect us of having been worsted in the struggle if we agreed to any compromise, if we shrank from a full assertion of our undoubted right to deprive that foe of all power to annoy us in the future. The least show of weakness before our Indian subjects and allies would embolden them, unfriendly at heart as they mostly are, to plot against our rule; some day perhaps to fight us "on other fields than those of the Panjáb." Events had proved the utter futility of our attempts to establish a strong friendly power

between the Afgháns and the British frontier, while the conjunction of Sikh and Afghán arms had been "a direct appeal to Mohammadan India." For the safety of our Indian Empire it had now become absolutely needful to extend our frontier to the Sulaiman Hills.

As for the little Mahárája, neither justice nor precedent could exempt him from his share of the penalty incurred by the sins of his unruly people. No feeling of "misplaced and mistimed compassion for the fate of a child" might turn the Governor-General aside from fulfilling a duty owed to the millions under his charge. The Sikhs themselves were few in number as compared with the peaceful population of the Panjáb. However restless at the first, they would soon be tamed into due submission under a process similar to that which had wrought so happy a change among the Rohillas in Rohilkhand. As to the financial side of the question, Dalhousie was sure that in due time the Panjáb would prove "not only a secure, but also a profitable possession." Its revenues, already large, would be increased by the forfeiture of so many *jaigirs*, by the union of Multán with the other provinces, and by turning to good account the water-power of its many rivers, the general fruitfulness of its light loamy soil.*

Meanwhile at Lahór the doom thus pronounced against the dynasty of Ranjit Singh had been duly carried into effect by means of Sir Henry Lawrence, once more Resident, and of Mr. Henry Elliot, the Governor-General's Foreign Secretary. At a conference held by the latter on the 28th of March, Tej Singh and Dinanáth, the leading members of the Lahór Council, discussed the terms which set up the East India Company in the room of Dhulíp Singh. Yielding with a show of natural reluctance to their fate, they affixed their seals to the unwelcome document. The reading of the proclamation took place the next day. On his throne in the audience hall sat for the last time the boy-king, then in his twelfth year. Englishmen and natives lined the walls on either side. The British envoys took their seats among the Council. Amidst a deep silence the fatal edict was read aloud in English, Persian, and Hindustani. By silence also was the reading followed, the Rajah Dinanáth alone remarking that the decree of the Governor-General, however hard upon Dhulíp Singh, must be obeyed. The paper of conditions, already accepted by the young king's chief ministers, was then handed by Rajah Tej Singh to his erewhile master, who forthwith signed away for himself

* Panjáb Blue-book.

and his heirs all further claim to the royalties of Ranjit Singh. Then Mr. Elliot took his leave, and as he passed away from the palace the English colours flowed out from the ramparts of the citadel, while the booming of guns in their honour proclaimed to all within that crowded city that the power and glory of the Khálsa had been utterly eclipsed at last by the full-risen sun of British supremacy.*

Under this agreement, ratified a few days later by the Governor-General, Dhulíp Singh had yielded up his right to all the dignities, realms, crown-lands, and other property of his royal father, in exchange for a pension of fifty thousand a year and free leave to dwell anywhere in British territory outside the Panjáb, with his old friends about him, and with no stint of the honours usually paid to dethroned princes by the servants of the East India Company.† Out of the spoil thus won for the India House Lord Dalhousie set aside for the Queen of England one large and costly diamond, the famous Koh-i-Nur or Hill of Light, whose fabled gleams had decked the turbans or thrones of successive kings and conquerors reigning at Kábul, Delhi, Lahór, Ispahan, from the day when a king of Málwa first yielded it up to a Pathán sovereign of the house that Bábar supplanted, down to the day when Ranjit Singh bought it for a mere trifle from his helpless prisoner-guest, Shah Shujá, the last of the Duráni line of Ahmad Shah. A donation of six months' batta, only half as much as Hardinge had granted to the victors of Firózshahr and Sobráon, was all that the Court of Directors tardily bestowed upon Gough's victorious soldiers, many months after the close of a long campaign crowned by the conquest of a powerful kingdom and the capture of a booty valued at several millions. In the same grudging spirit did the Court at first award a medal with one clasp for Gujarát only, until Lord Gough's earnest remonstrances wrung from it a clasp for Chilianwála also, and a third for Multán.

In taking upon himself to annex the Panjáb without special orders from England, Lord Dalhousie merely forestalled the common verdict of his countrymen at home. The usual honours were freely awarded by Parliament and the Crown to all concerned in bringing about so memorable an issue. The thanks voted by both Houses to the victors of Multán and Gujarát were emphasized by

* Arnold; Trotter.

† The Sikh Government had never paid one rupee of its promised subsidy, and its debts to India exceeded fifty lakhs. Therefore Dalhousie confiscated all the Crown property.

the special praise which the Duke of Wellington and Sir John Hobhouse bestowed on Edwardes, Abbott, Lake, and other of the younger men whose deeds had filled their countrymen with just pride. On the same day, the 5th of April, a like vote of thanks was carried, with only one dissentient, by the assembled owners of East India stock. The Earl of Dalhousie was made a Marquis and Lord Gough a Viscount. The critics of Chilianwála ceased from reviling the brave old Irishman who had since so utterly crushed the Sikhs at Gujarát. Gilbert and Thackwell obtained the Grand Cross of the Bath; Campbell, Cheape, and Wheeler became Knights Commanders, and others of Gough's captains were made Companions of the same Order. By an act of tardy justice Gilbert was afterwards made a Baronet; but General Whish, the conqueror of Multán, gained no higher mark of distinction than Campbell or Cheape, while Brigadier Tennant, who commanded the artillery that mainly won Gujarát, had to content himself with the reward conferred on any brigadier of foot. The gallant Edwardes won his brevet-majority and the dignity of a C.B.; Lake, Taylor, and Herbert received their meed of public recognition; but James Abbott, who had held his lonely post at Nára through months of extreme peril, came in for no other honour than that awarded to officers of the general staff.

Nor did Lord Dalhousie overlook the services rendered by his allies. Colonel Cortlandt was taken into the British service, without any retrenchment of his good Sikh pay. The faithful ruler of Bháwalpur received a yearly allowance of ten thousand pounds, besides recovering the costs incurred by him during the campaign. Eight of Edwardes's best officers were pensioned by the same liberal hand, and two thousand of his best troops were brought upon the rolls of the Indian army. Nor was the loyal Shaikh Imám-ud-din left unrewarded for the help furnished by his troops, first to the army before Multán, and afterwards to Gilbert during his pursuit of Sher Singh.

But how fared the leaders in the late revolt? After the surrender at Ráwal-Pindi the grey-haired Chatar Singh, with his two sons, Sher and Autar Singh, had to appear in person before Lord Gough at Wazirábád. Passed on thence to Lahór, they heard on the 7th of April the decree which, stripping them of their landed fiefs, granted them enough to live upon in the retirement of their native village, Attári. They were further bidden to yield up all their arms, to dismiss their followers, and never, on pain of fresh

penalties, to ride more than three or four miles beyond their future home. This was not a very generous way of treating a brave though greatly erring foe.

The other chiefs of less note were sent on like conditions to their several homes. Later in the year 1849 this limited freedom had in many cases to be exchanged for closer confinement. On the 1st of October Sher Singh's party, that of Lál Singh in Amritsar and of Hakim Rai at Siálkot, were all three suddenly arrested by British officers and carried off to Lahór in requital for some new plot woven against the peace of the Panjáb. Under the watch of European sentries and the ward of European officers, first in the citadel of Lahór, afterwards in Fort William, the captive nobles were doomed for several years to regret the folly which led them to break their word of honour in a vain attempt to undo the consequences of Gujarát.*

With the fate reserved for the arch-rebel, Mulráj, no fault can fairly be found. On the 31st of May, 1849, he was brought to trial before a special court, of which Mr. Charles Mansel of the Bengal Civil Service was President, with Mr. Robert Montgomery and Brigadier Penny for his fellow-judges. The prisoner was arraigned on three charges, for aiding in the murder of Agnew and Anderson, as accessory before and as accessory after the fact. By the close of the trial on the 22nd of June the court had sat in all for fourteen days, and listened to the jarring, the perplexing statements of eleven witnesses for the prosecution and nine for the defence. At the last day's sitting Mulráj shook his head in silent protest as the finding of the court on each charge in turn was read aloud. On each in turn he was declared guilty; but it remained with the Governor-General to consider the Court's appeal for mercy on account of circumstances which might seem to palliate the prisoner's guilt. As the possible sport of those circumstances, as one misled perhaps by his unbelief in English clemency and love of fairplay, by a slavish fear of the taunts and threats of ambitious kinsfolk and fanatic followers, Mulráj was in due time to receive a fair measure of that mercy which his cowardice, if nothing worse, had withheld from the innocent victims of a plot brewed before his own eyes. On the 31st of July the faint-hearted son of Sáwan Mal was called up before the Court, to hear the Governor-General's award, to learn that his lawful sentence had been commuted to close imprisonment for life. Instead of the death already inflicted on the miscreant

* Trotter.

Gujar Singh, he was allowed to drag on the short remainder of his life in a state of bondage hardly preferable to death itself.

With the conquest of the Panjáb ended the series of Indian wars which sprang directly or indirectly out of the wanton invasion of Afghánistán by Lord Auckland in 1838. What Ranjit Singh himself had once predicted, as he looked at a map of India in which the Company's possessions were coloured red, had virtually come to pass within ten years of his own death. In little more than ninety years from the battle of Plassy all India from the Khaibar to Cape Comorin had "become red," for not one of the Native Princes within its borders but paid some form of tribute to the Paramount Power whose agents swayed the policy of every Native Court from Travankór to Srinagar, from Lucknow to Haidarábád. The last seven years had witnessed the overthrow of three powerful native armies, the capture of many hundred guns, and the subjection of two large kingdoms to our direct rule. By the latest and the most momentous of these new conquests British India was extended on the north-west to its natural boundaries along the Sulaiman Hills, while its northern frontier wound alongside the mountain barriers of Kashmir. About 250 miles broad at its widest part and 450 long from north to south, the Panjáb of those days enclosed within its triangular outlines an area of 80,000 square miles, peopled by nine or ten million souls of diverse races, castes, and creeds. The great bulk of these were Mohammadans, mainly of Hindu descent, some even of the nobler Hindu castes.* In the central plains the Sikhs and Játs, along the Indus and the western marshes the Pathán, Bilúchi, and Moghal tribes abound. The Hindu Gujars, who gave their name to Gujarát and Gujránwála, tend their herds on the wild uplands or amidst broad belts of sandy scrub, and share with Játs and other tribes in the labours of the plough and spade. Hindus of pure or mixed blood inhabit the north-eastern uplands, and find their way as traders, clerks, lawyers, placemen, artisans, into almost every town and village. Of the whole population only a million belonged to that warrior race, the Sikh children of Govind, mostly of Ját descent, whose real home lay in the Mánjha, that part of the Bári-Doáb which spreads around the populous cities of Amritsar and Lahór.†

* Out of thirty-one Rájput clans enumerated by Major Smyth, twenty-three were either wholly or partly Musalman. Among these were the Chohan Rájputs.

† Arnold; Hunter's "Gazetteer of India."

The neck of the Sikh dominion once fairly broken at Gujarát, it became no hard matter to enforce the new rule, under Lord Dalhousie's able guidance, on a people powerless through late defeats and long-standing rivalries of race and creed to withstand the reforming energy of their new masters, backed by the presence of a strong British garrison. From the bulk of the Hindus there was no open outbreak to fear, while the Mohammadans, who had so lately helped Edwardes and Abbott against the Sikhs, rejoiced at the humbling of a military caste always ready to defile their mosques and ill-treat their holy men. And the Sikhs themselves, now utterly beaten by the only foe they had ever fought in vain, seemed, with the good humour of old soldiers, to accept a fate in their eyes the less unbearable, since it came before them in the shape of two such rulers as Henry Lawrence and his brother John. On the very day after the reading of the proclamation, Amritsar itself, their holy city, lighted up its thousands of coloured lamps, and listened contentedly to the hymns which a train of long-bearded priests chanted in honour of the victorious Farangi.

CHAPTER VII.

INDIA UNDER LORD DALHOUSIE.

For the task of governing his new conquests Lord Dalhousie called to his aid many of the ablest and most promising men in the ranks of the Company's service. A commission of fifty-six gentlemen, chosen in nearly equal proportions from the civil and military branches of that service, was appointed to discharge the various duties of Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, and Assistant Commissioners, under a Board of Three, to whom were entrusted the highest powers, short of those reserved for the Governor-General himself. At the head of this Board, by right of age, experience, and past services, sat Sir Henry Lawrence, of all men perhaps the best fitted to win a proud though conquered people into a state of peaceful submission to a foreign, however merciful, rule. Under a leader of his acknowledged worth, whose personal influence was largely strengthened by their belief in his Ikbál, or lucky star, the Sikhs, who still formed the ruling class in the country, would feel sure of receiving all fair, kindly, and courteous treatment at the hands of their late conquerors. By the side of Sir Henry, a worthy colleague and fit successor, sat his younger and sterner-natured brother John, whose recent interviews with Lord Dalhousie had deepened the impression already made by his brilliant services in Jalandhar. The result of those interviews had not only confirmed the Governor-General in his resolve to annex the Panjáb forthwith, it had also proved to him how closely the ideas and opinions of the Commissioner of Jalandhar agreed with his own. With Henry Lawrence, who disliked the new policy, and felt strongly on behalf of the old ruling and fighting classes, he had from the first a very imperfect sympathy; but in John Lawrence he found a man after his own heart, one of those strong, shrewd, hard-headed, hard-working, self-forgetting "Ironsides of the Public Service"—as Kaye called

them—who might safely be trusted to work out a definite policy in the most consistent way.*

With characteristic reluctance, the Commissioner of Jalandhar agreed to exchange the post he had filled so ably during the past three years for the second seat on the new Board. While his elder brother undertook the special management of all political affairs, to John Lawrence was made over the wide department of revenue and finance. The third member of this triumvirate, Mr. Charles Mansel, who had done good work as a revenue officer under Thomason, and was known, says Arnold, "to possess a thoughtful and inventive mind," took special charge of the police and the administration of justice. Under these men were gathered a brilliant staff of officers, civil and military, each of whose names was to shed its own lustre on the pages of Indian history. Never was Dalhousie's genius for rule displayed more happily than in his choice of agents for the public service in the Panjáb, some of whom, like George Lawrence, Edwardes, Abbott, Nicholson, and Mackeson, had already earned their claim to further distinction. For administrative purposes the new dominion, including Jalandhar, was marked out into seven divisions, each ruled by its own Commissioner through a small but adequate staff of assistants, English and Native. One of these Commissioners, Mr. Robert Montgomery, was erelong to fill Mr. Mansel's place on the Board with a vigour and ability all his own. The Commissioners and their English subalterns discharged duties of many different kinds. They were, says Kaye, "judges, revenue collectors, thief-catchers, diplomatists, conservancy officers, and sometimes recruiting sergeants and chaplains, all in one." No wonder that men so trained under such masters as the two Lawrences became "equal to any fortune, and in no conjuncture, however critical, were ever likely to fail."† Going to and fro among the people of their respective districts, sharing often in their sports, and keeping their tents open to all comers, however lowly, they soon succeeded in winning the trustful admiration of all who came within their reach.

The first efforts of the Lahór Board were naturally turned to the safe holding of a conquered country nearly as large as France, against all foes, whether from within or without. The people were disarmed throughout the province, those only who dwelt at

* Kaye; Trotter. "Life of Sir H. Lawrence," by Edwardes and Merivale.
† Kaye; Arnold.

Pesháwar, along the western marches, and in the Hazára highlands being allowed to wear arms in self-defence against the hillmen across the border. A strong police force, well armed and partly organized in regiments of foot and troops of horse, patrolled the roads, guarded the jails and treasuries, and enabled the district officers to maintain law and order within their several jurisdictions. For the rural districts the old indigenous system of village watchmen was kept up on an amended footing. Besides the large regular garrison which, under Sir W. Gilbert, held guard over the chief towns and districts between Pesháwar and Multán, a special force of ten regiments—five of horse and as many of foot—recruited each from its own district, with a due complement of field-guns manned by Sikhs, a camel corps, two companies of sappers, and a guide corps, horse and foot, enlarged from that raised in 1846 by Sir H. Lawrence, was set to guard the long line of western frontier and the gates of Afghán trade from the inroads of the neighbouring mountaineers. A chain of frontier forts at short intervals, with a good system of roads between and behind them, enhanced the efficiency of the new force. Roads were gradually cut through the wide bushy wastes that covered so large a part of the Panjáb, and had long served as a convenient lair for cattle-lifters and criminals of every kind.

Of the old Khálsa soldiery thousands were pensioned off, or persuaded by timely bounties to turn to the tilling of their native fields. Many more entered the police and the frontier regiments, or availed themselves of the Governor-General's new decree touching the enlistment of Sikh recruits into the ranks of that army against which they had just been waging so stern a war. Assessed to the land-revenue at rates comparatively fair, and entrusted with magisterial and other powers, the Talúkdárs, or great landholders of the Panjáb, soon found their interest in supporting the new rule. Agriculture throve apace under a revenue system which left the husbandman a fair margin of profit upon his crops. The old Sikh Sardárs and fief-holders were treated as tenderly as equal justice to all classes, a wise economy, and a due regard for old use and wont would allow. If they had to bewail the loss of some old feudal privileges and the partial resumption of grants in land or money for services no longer needed by the State, they felt grateful at least to Sir Henry Lawrence for his unwearied efforts to save them from worse mishaps. Ranjit Singh's rude and haphazard system of justice made way for a simple and humane code of laws which, enforced

by zealous and upright officers, dealt swift punishment to all proved offenders, and enabled the humblest to obtain cheap and easy redress. Trade was fostered by the making of roads in all directions, by the removal of a network of transit duties on all kinds of goods, and by the measures taken to suppress those crimes of violence which had flourished ever since the death of Ranjit Singh, the highway robberies once favoured even by Sikh nobles, and the murderous Thaggi which, hunted out of British India, had found a new home among the Játs and low-caste Sikhs of the Panjáb.* Thanks to the zeal and constancy with which Mr. Brereton, of the Bengal Civil Service, followed up the clues obtained from a few Thags who escaped death by timely confessions, hundreds of these traffickers in human lives were tracked down and brought to the gallows. Gang after gang was broken up, and in due time the horrible practice which the Thags had followed with the zest of sportsmen in search of game died out in the Panjáb also.†

In the matter of education the Board had only to carry on and develop to larger issues the work bequeathed to them by the ministers of Ranjit Singh. As compared with our older provinces the indigenous schools in the Panjáb had given instruction to a large percentage of children, not only of all creeds and classes, but even of either sex. Long before a school for girls was founded in Hindustán, several hundred girl scholars were learning their simple lessons from native teachers in the country beyond the Satlaj. The Panjábis were apt scholars, and the efforts of their new masters to imbue them with a taste for Western learning, conveyed in part through the English tongue, were soon rewarded with visible success. The old endowments and privileges of every existing school were carefully respected. In every district new schools were opened, to which the poorest villagers could send their children on payment of a trifling fee. The English schools set up in the larger towns were speedily filled with pupils eager to qualify themselves for careers of usefulness in the lower ranks of the public service. Many even of the old Sikh Sardárs opened their purses freely in behalf of the new learning which their sons were enabled to acquire in the great central schools of Amritsar and

* Arnold ; Trotter.

† "Thaggi is our shikár—our sport," said a Mazbi Sikh, when asked how many men he had helped to murder. The Mazbis were scavengers by calling and ruffians by habit.

Lahór.* It was our good fortune to meet in the Panjáb with few of those religious and caste difficulties which hindered the march of knowledge elsewhere. Sikhs, Hindús, Mohammadans seemed to forget their class hatreds and their traditional prejudices in the tonic atmosphere of the new rule.

A spirit of justice, largely tempered by mercy, marked the Board's dealings with all existing tenures, whether of land or money-grants, from the old Sikh State. To all kinds of vested interests, Lord Dalhousie had enjoined the utmost deference compatible with the public weal; and Sir H. Lawrence was not the man to bear hard on the classes that suffered most in social importance from a change of masters. He would have gone much further, indeed, in the opposite direction, but for the restraining hands of his brother John and their common chief. Assignments on the revenue were confirmed to every pensioner whose claims were supported either by official documents or by evidence of long possession. In some cases, fixed money payments were substituted for grants of land or land-revenue. Some claims were paid off in the lump; others were acknowledged only for a lifetime or for two or three lives; but all those which rested on the authority of local officers were at once disallowed. With religious and charitable trusts, no meddling was the rule. No *inam* or freehold, for whatever purpose granted, was resumed without full inquiry, and fair compensation for vested rights; nor did every fief-holder forfeit his *jaigir* because the conditions on which he held it were such as he might no longer discharge.†

The land-revenue was readjusted on the principles which John Lawrence had applied so successfully beyond the Biyás. In the old Sikh days, it had amounted to one-half of the gross produce. Under the survey now effected, the assessments were lowered by an average of twenty-five per cent.; and the new settlements made with the Túlukdárs and the headmen of village communities ran for terms which varied, according to the nature of the land, from ten to thirty years. In spite of the reduced assessments, the land-revenue, in the second year of our rule, amounted to a *kror* of rupees, or one million sterling; part of which was derived from new lands brought under the plough.

While the President of the Board busied himself in pleading for the merciful treatment of Sikh Sardárs and in making friends

* Arnold.

† Kaye; Arnold. In the Panjáb the old village communities still owned the greater part of the land.

among the semi-independent chiefs and princes on either side of the Satlaj, John Lawrence bent himself to the task of remodelling the fiscal system, at once complicated and oppressive, which Ranjit Singh had handed down to his successors. Under Sikh rule, a cunning network of taxation covered the whole country, catching in its meshes every product of trade or industry that sought a market either within or beyond the Panjáb. The very camel-drivers had to pay for the right of grazing on wastes dotted with thorns and tufts of coarse grass; while no merchant could make his way through the country without paying a dozen duties on the same goods. Nothing taxable escaped the fiscal shears. The reforms projected by the Resident of Lahor had been hindered in their working by the rebellion of 1848. John Lawrence took up the dropped threads with so hearty a will, that in nine months after the annexation, all the old imposts were swept away, except the tolls levied at the public ferries, and an excise duty on drugs and strong drinks. Of the old customs-lines not one was left; but it was found necessary to extend into the Panjáb the preventive line which shut out the salt of Rájputána from the North-West Provinces. The salt-mines on the Jhilam and the Indus were taken over by the State, and an excise duty of two rupees was levied on every maund* delivered at the mine's mouth. A stamp-duty on civil suits and trade-agreements yielded in due time a sensible addition to the public revenue. Erelong the four new taxes imposed by the Board brought in as large a revenue as the forty-eight exacted by the government of Ranjit Singh.†

Nor amidst a crowd of competing duties did the Lahór Board overlook the need of supplying the country with good roads and fertilizing its thirsty plains by means of canals. Under the skilful management of Colonel Robert Napier, aided by liberal grants from the treasury, both classes of works were pushed forward with a vigour which soon bore noticeable fruit. Chief among the former class was the great Trunk Road, which, after some years, linked Peshâwar with Lahór, and both with Delhi and the capital of British India. It clove its way through several ranges of rugged hills, and crossed the beds of four great rivers by means of embankments and floating bridges. Other roads served to connect the larger towns, the new military stations, and to furnish

* A maund or *man* equals about 80 lbs., or forty *sirs*.

† Arnold; Marshman; Sir R. Temple's "Administration Report."

easier and shorter channels for the foreign trade.* The trees that lined the highways gave shelter to man and beast, and the wells dug at frequent intervals enabled them to slake their thirst. Of the old irrigation canals, some of them dating from the earliest Pathán kings, many were rescued from partial or entire decay; the rest were improved in various ways, and one new canal was undertaken on a scale rivalling the greatest works of French or Italian engineers. Tapping the Rávi near the foot of the Himalayas, this noble product of Napier's science and Dalhousie's statesmanship waters nearly the whole length of the Bári-Doáb, throwing out branches to Kassúr, Lahór, and Sobráon, and rejoining the Rávi near its confluence with the Chináb, after a course of 247 miles, besides branches which amount to 240 more. For the work of repairing old canals, the peasantry of each district were required to furnish their own share of the needful labour; and loans for the same purpose were granted to the Zamindárs, who made a point of repaying them at the earliest possible date.†

The care of the young Mahárája was entrusted to Dr. Login, an assistant-surgeon of the Bengal Army. Under his supervision the little Sikh prince acquired a training which enabled him in after years to discharge with credit the duties of an English nobleman in the land of his ultimate choice. While yet a youth living in his own country, Dhulíp Singh, of his own accord, exchanged the faith of his fathers for that of the people among whom his lot has since been cast.‡ In his English home his royal mother, the restless Chand-Kaur, was destined to close her turbulent and chequered life. Her intrigues had not ended with her banishment to Banáras. Only a few days after the annexation, she was plotting her escape from British custody. On the 6th of April, 1849, she was made to shift her lodgings from Banáras to the riverside fortress of Chunár. That same evening the beautiful vixen stole away from her new quarters, put on the garb of a pilgrim, and set off on her long lonely journey towards the capital of Nipál. Not until the 19th was her flight discovered, although the officer on duty had remarked a curious change in the voice which answered him daily from behind the *pardah*. Landing safe at last within the Nipálese border, she besought the King of Nipál for free shelter among his bleak hills. While the Court of Káthmandú was yet considering its reply, the Indian

* Some 3,600 miles of road in all were completed by 1854 under Napier, besides 1,000 in Jalandhar.

† Arnold; Kaye. ‡ This was written before his late escapade.

Government untied the knot by seizing all her property at Banáras and allowing her to stay where she was on a sorry pension of a thousand rupees a month. Many years had yet to pass before the widow of Ranjit Singh made her way, half blind, and prematurely aged, to her son's adopted country, where, in 1863, she quietly breathed her last.*

In all the good work planned or undertaken by the Lahór Board the Governor-General himself bore an active and important part. His helping hand or his guiding spirit was traceable in all the leading features of the new rule. His eyes were everywhere, as he travelled from time to time across the length and breadth of his new dominion. Like the Duke of Wellington, he would see for himself that everything he had ordered or sanctioned was duly carried out, even to the smallest details. Nothing seemed too small to attract his notice or too great for his reforming zeal. The Frontier Force was the child of his own brain; so too were the groves and avenues which sprang up in the dry places; so too were the measures taken for the sanitation of populous towns and for the well-being of British troops cantoned in the Panjáb. If Lord Dalhousie's officers found him a strict and keen-eyed overseer, they soon learned that he never failed to reward them liberally according to their deserts.

On the 7th of May, 1849, Sir Charles Napier took over the chief command of the Indian armies from the brave old Irishman whose recent victory at Gujarát had gone far to wipe out the memory of former blunders, laid not always fairly to his charge. In a farewell order of the 16th of May Lord Gough took leave of the army which in the course of nearly six years he had led to victory in "four memorable campaigns," and to whose valour, discipline, and trust in their leader he owed "whatever of rank or reputation he had latterly obtained." Disappointed of the glory he had gone out to win, Napier consoled himself by plunging with his usual recklessness into heated controversies with the Government of which he was a member. The self-willed old soldier of sixty-nine, who had once governed a large Indian province, chafed against the control so firmly yet quietly wielded over all his colleagues by "a young Scotch lord as weak as water and as vain as a pretty woman or an ugly man." Nor did he care to conceal his impatient scorn for the "politicals" to whom Lord Dalhousie had made over the government of his new province. His imperious nature and his restless self-conceit prompted him to meddle at every turn with

* Trotter; Kaye.

matters far beyond his own experience and the duties of his office. He would have taken all power into his own hands, had Lord Dalhousie been half as weak as he chose to paint him. He tried to force upon the Lahór Board a scheme of his own planning for the government of the Panjáb, a scheme which really meant the transfer of supreme power in that province into the hands of the Commander-in-Chief. The controversy thus provoked was long and bitter, for Napier wielded a caustic pen, and Sir Henry Lawrence could not always command his temper against such a foe. But it left the Board exactly where it was before.*

Other events were meanwhile calling for Napier's presence in the Panjáb. In the beginning of December, 1849, Colonel George Lawrence set out from Pesháwar with a picked force under Colonel Bradshaw to punish some refractory Zamindárs in the Yusafzai country. Some sharp fighting, in which Coke's Sikh infantry and Lumsden's Patháns bore their part, resulted in the rout of the enemy and the burning of several villages—a mode of punishment less cruel than it sounds to English ears. On the 9th of February, 1850, Colonel Bradshaw and George Lawrence again led their troops from Pesháwar to aid in punishing certain Afridi tribes who had savagely attacked a party of sappers working at the new road begun by George Lawrence for the purpose of connecting Pesháwar with Kohát. Such was the way in which these fierce highlanders protested against a measure which threatened to curtail their independence, or at least their ancestral rights of robbery and murder. Perhaps, too, they resented the new duties levied at the salt-mines of Kohát. Be that as it may, a compact force of all arms under Sir Colin Campbell, accompanied by Napier himself, took its way into the long-winding pass of Mithni, where the murderous attack on our sappers had taken place. Skirmishing as they went on, the troops burned six villages in requital of the late murders. After reinforcing the small garrison at Kohát they retraced their steps towards Pesháwar. But the enemy who had so vainly withstood their advance now hung upon their retreat with fierce tenacity, galling the main body with their matchlocks and trying to cut off some of the flanking parties on the heights above. There was hard fighting for the rear-guard on the 13th over the thirteen miles of pass that led back to Mithni. Coke's Panjábis won special praise for their steady skirmishing from first to last; and Fordyce's howitzers did excellent service whenever they got the chance. Napier himself, no lenient critic,

* Merivale's "Sir H. Lawrence"; "Life of Sir C. Napier."

in a general order extolled the soldiership of each and all concerned in that well-ordered march through a hill-country swarming with foes "renowned for being the most daring and dexterous plunderers in the world."*

But Napier's song of triumph was somewhat premature. It was true that the post at Kohát had been reinforced at the cost of only twenty lives, without the loss of a single piece of baggage. But in spite of burned villages and slaughtered warriors the Afridis had not been cowed into full submission. As soon as Campbell's column was safely housed around Pesháwar, these wild sons of Ishmael swarmed again for mischief along the road to Kohát. On the 28th of February they attacked a tower commanding the Mithni Pass. Coke's Panjábis, coming up to the rescue of the beleaguered outpost, underwent a siege which issued in the abandonment of a post no longer tenable. The road from Kohát to Pesháwar became once more closed to peaceful travellers. Kohát itself could still draw its supplies by a road newly opened in another direction; and the Afridis, satisfied with their success, forbore for some months from any worse outrage than the murder of one or two Europeans who strayed across their path.

By this time Napier had dealt after his own stern fashion with another of those mutinies which from time to time revealed the great danger to which our rule in India was exposed. As early as July, 1849, it was known at Simla that two Sepoy regiments at Ráwal-Pindi had refused at first to take their pay, and that other regiments at other stations in the Panjáb were about to follow their example. It was the old story of the Sind mutinies told over again. Resenting the loss of extra batta caused by the conversion of a foreign country into a British province, the Sepoys in the Panjáb and those destined to march thither were quietly combining to strike for higher pay. Some of the ringleaders at Ráwal-Pindi were tried and punished by court-martial; but the example failed to deter the Sepoys at Wazirábád from asserting their grievance in the same unlawful way. Colonel Hearsey's prompt vigour and suasive eloquence soon brought the men of the 32nd Bengal Infantry to their senses. A few of the worst offenders were tried by a general court-martial and sentenced to imprisonment for fourteen years. To Napier, however, even this punishment seemed too light for the crime of which they had been found guilty. Sentence of death being finally recorded against them, their stern commander-in-chief allowed the culprits, whose offence

* Trotter; G. Lawrence; Mawson's "Records of Napier's Indian Command."

he depicted in the strongest colours, to "linger out their miserable lives in eternal exile, in a strange land beyond the seas."

But the plague was not yet stayed even by a punishment which Napier accounted worse than death. In the fort of Govindgarh, outside the holy Sikh city of Amritsar, sounds of discontent were making themselves heard in January, 1850, among the Sepoys of the 66th Regiment, lately arrived from Lucknow. On the last day of the month those sounds grew louder, deputies from several companies went up to speak with the commandant, Major Troup, touching the amount of their future pay. If war should break out with Gulâb Singh, would the Sepoys, they asked, be certain of receiving the extra batta of which they were now deprived? Assured of their masters' liberal intentions, they went away in seeming content. But the calmer mood soon gave place to a hot fit of rebellious wrath. On the morrow Troup paraded his men. They listened to his words in sulky silence; at first they refused to go back to their lines. Again, on the 2nd of February, they were paraded outside the fort. Their commandant's firm but temperate language failing to hush the noisier malcontents, one of these, a native officer, was ordered into arrest. An attempt to rescue him on the spot was baffled only by the strong personal influence which English officers still wielded over their men.

Hardly had the Sepoys fallen back into their places when a troop of the 1st Bengal Cavalry, despatched by Colonel Bradford from Amritsar, rode up to the gate of Govindgarh. The men on guard, a company of the mutinous regiment, would have closed the gate against these new-comers, but for Captain Macdonald, the fort adjutant, who drove off the mutineers with his drawn sword, and so let the cavalry in. With the help of some more troops, summoned the day before to the scene of disorder, the mutineers were marched out under the guns of the fort. Erelong a hundred and seventy ringleaders, picked out by their native officers, were awaiting the award of the court-martial, which Gilbert had promptly ordered to assemble at Govindgarh. On the 8th of February the trial began. In less than a week the court's work was over. Of the whole number thirteen were acquitted, and eighty-five dismissed the service; while the rest paid for their mutinous folly by imprisonment with hard labour for terms ranging from six months to fourteen years. But with the punishment of its worst offenders that of the regiment was not thus to end. To Napier himself it seemed that nothing short of disbanding a regiment so widely tainted with mutiny would

meet the demands of military justice. For months past he had set his face against so extreme a measure; but altered circumstances now seemed to justify his change of mind. On the 21st of March the order for disbanding the 66th was carried into effect at the large station of Ambála, lying within view of the Simla hills. In presence of the whole force there cantoned the disgraced regiment was drawn up for its last parade, to hear the reading of the sentence which struck every native officer and Sepoy off the strength of the Company's service. That done, the men were escorted out of cantonments by a few irregular horse; the drums of each regiment playing in its turn "The Rogue's March" as, sullenly or sadly, the disbanded soldiers slouched past. Their colours, arms, and accoutrements were made over by Napier's command to "the brave and loyal men of the Nasiri Battalion," who were thenceforth to be styled the 66th Gorkhas, and to receive the line rates of pay.*

In thus taking upon himself to "fling the Gorkha Battalion into the scale" against mutiny and Brahman influences, Napier certainly went beyond his powers. If he had stopped there, Lord Dalhousie might have overlooked a stretch of authority justified, or at least excused, by the danger of the moment. But the wilful old soldier took his own way to a point at which Lord Dalhousie could not but interfere. In 1845 Lord Hardinge had decreed that whenever the cost of the Sepoy's ordinary food, his *átá*, *dál*, and *ghi*,† exceeded three rupees and a half monthly, the difference should be added to the Sepoy's pay. In flat disobedience of Lord Dalhousie's positive command, Napier set this rule aside for one a year older and slightly more favourable to the Sepoy. For this breach of manifest duty the Governor-General quietly but firmly took him to task. The Commander-in-Chief was given clearly to understand that the Governor-General in Council would not again permit him, "under any circumstances, to issue orders which should change the pay and allowances of the troops serving in India."

The receipt of this rebuke brought to a head the strife which had lately raged between two able and distinguished men, neither of whom could bear the least encroachment on what seemed to him his own domain. While Napier fought hard for his own way

* Trotter; Kaye; Mawson. Major Troup himself was severely, though justly, rebuked for having neglected to read and explain to his men the Order of October, 1849, which announced the withdrawal of Sind allowances from the troops serving in the Panjáb.

† Flour, pulse, and clarified butter, the main ingredients of a Sepoy's dinner.

in matters of which, as head of the Indian armies, he deemed himself the fittest judge, Dalhousie, young, masterful and clear-headed, would never yield an inch to an opponent whose ambition like his arrogance overleaped the bounds of decency and common sense. He could not bring himself, after much inquiry, to admit the force of Napier's reasons for exceeding his lawful powers and flying in the face of the Governor-General. And it seemed to him that Napier was much given to changing his opinions according to his humour. In March, 1849, Napier's trust in the Native Army was "firm as a rock." Even when ill-used they were less dangerous than British troops. When Napier pleaded, in defence of his subsequent conduct, that the whole of our 40,000 Sepoys in the Panjáb were tainted with mutiny, and that our Indian Empire was at stake, Lord Dalhousie quoted against him his own statement, written only four days earlier, that a more obedient and orderly army than that of India he had never seen, and that only "a few discontented scoundrels" had sought to dictate to the Government how much pay its soldiers should receive.*

Whether Lord Dalhousie was right or wrong in making light of the alleged danger, Napier at any rate now saw that he had found his master in the young Scotch lord of whom he had once spoken with a scorn so groundless. On the 22nd of May he wrote a letter to the Horse Guards asking for leave to resign his command on the score of age and failing health. His case was laid before his old friend the Duke of Wellington, who decided with his usual fairness that Napier had no cause for complaint against Lord Dalhousie, inasmuch as the mutiny had been too partial to warrant the course pursued by the Commander-in-Chief against the orders of the Supreme Government. The post which Napier had resigned was made over to Sir William Gomm, erewhile Governor of the Mauritius, a mild old gentleman of refined tastes, who had done good service in the Peninsular and Waterloo campaigns. On the 6th of December, at Calcutta, the new Commander-in-Chief was duly sworn in. Three days later the retiring chief was taking a farewell review at Firózpur of a part of that army against whose officers he launched, on the very same day, as strong a sermon as ever was penned on the disgrace and wickedness of running into debt. That the sermon hit its mark in many quarters cannot be denied. But it remained a question whether such an onslaught on a tendency often traceable to other causes than those specially assigned, should have been reserved for a

* Kaye; Merivale; Marshman.

farewell order to an army which Napier had been commanding for eighteen months past. To many persons who knew that army and its eccentric commander the lecture sounded like a parting outburst of Napierian spite, of that restless vanity which marred so many passages of a life remarkable for varied talents and great deeds.*

Towards the end of 1849, the Indian Government took steps to chastise the Rajah of Sikhim, a small hill-state running up between Nipál and Bhotán, for his outrageous treatment of two English doctors, Hooker and Campbell, who in the course of their botanical researches about Darjiling had wandered too far from British ground. In obedience to the warnings of a Chinese guard they were about retracing their steps, when some of the Rajah's men rushed upon them, throwing them to the ground and binding them with ropes so tightly as to cause exquisite torture. For several weeks the two Englishmen were kept in close and cruel bondage. An old grudge against the Indian Government, whose lands adjoined his own, who paid him of their own free will six thousand rupees a year as rent for the hill-station of Darjiling, seems to have driven the Rajah into a course so unfriendly. On his first refusal to give up his prisoners, troops were ordered up towards Darjiling from the nearest stations in Bengal; but the snows of midwinter barred the way into Sikhim itself. On the 7th December the Rajah was induced to let his prisoners go. It was needful, however, to exact some penalty for such an offence. Towards the end of January a small force of infantry, with three hundred sappers and a few light guns, marched towards the Rangit river. The campaign proved entirely bloodless, for the Rajah fled to a remote fastness, and his troops were never to be seen. As a punishment for his behaviour towards a Government which had made his ancestor free of Nipál, he was stripped of the lands bestowed upon him at the close of the Nipál war; and no more rent was paid him for Darjiling.

While the Khánd chief, Chokro Bissai, was still raiding at large into the Gumsar highlands, Colonel Campbell had begun a fresh campaign against human sacrifices in the hills of Chinna Kimédi, a Khánd district lying south and west of Gumsar. By a careful mixture of firmness and kind treatment, he contrived to rescue two hundred Meriahs in one season from a horrible death, and won over the wild tribes around him to forswear a practice which the Govern-

* Trotter; Marahman; Mawson. As an indirect study of character Mawson's "Records" is a most amusing and instructive book.

ment were bent on putting down. Another hundred were saved alive in Bódh; a hundred and twenty children were made over to the neighbouring missionaries, to be reared at the public cost. Many of the Meriah girls were trained to household work under the eye of a trustworthy matron at Suráda; of the males some were settled in farming villages, others apprenticed to different trades, enlisted into irregular corps, or given out as private servants. New lines of road were opened out in many directions, and ere long the Khánd language, as learned by zealous officers, was reduced to written form for the benefit of native schools and public servants in Khándistán.

Before the end of 1849, Campbell had also gone far to do away with the time-old practice of child murder from among the hill-men of Suráda. By dint of threats, promises, persuasions, he induced the heads of families to sign a pledge binding them under heavy penalties to rear up their female offspring, instead of sacrificing them to the Moloch of ancestral usage. Owing to the illness which for a time interrupted his labours, it devolved on other workers in the same field to follow up the blow thus dealt at a practice, founded partly on the poverty of the people, partly on their inveterate dislike to marriage between members of the same tribe.*

In other parts of Khándistán, fresh ground was broken during 1850 by Campbell's deputy, Captain Macvicar. Scores of Meriahs were saved from sacrifice; formal pledges were exacted from the chiefs; the Khánds of Patna were taught, like their kinsmen of Bódh and Gumsar, to sow their own fields with sacrificial oxen instead of men and women. Next year Campbell himself was at work among the man-slaying tribes of Jaipur, to put down the custom already dying out amidst the jungles of Chinna Kimédi. Their first answer to the Colonel's summons came in the shape of an assault upon his camp. Scattered by a few shots from his small escort, the assailants sent in their submission, gave up their Meriahs, and took the pledge against human sacrifices. At Bandári, in the same highlands, the people fled into the heart of the jungles, leaving behind them in token of defiance the severed head of a victim newly slain. Baffled in his efforts to treat with the runaways, Campbell sought to deter them from further sacrifices by ordering the village of Bandári with all its sacred relics to be destroyed. In spite of this partial failure, his efforts among the Jaipur Khánds resulted in the rescuing of a hundred and fifty-eight Meriahs

* Campbell's "Adventures among the Khánds."

during the few months of cool weather, in which Englishmen and Sepoys could bear the risks of a climate deadly beyond that of most tropical countries. Nor was his influence less happily exerted in appeasing some of the obstinate feuds which kept breaking out among these wild non-Aryan children of a land once famous in Hindu story, and still ruled by the scion of an old Rajput line.

In November, 1852, the unwearied Colonel started again on a mission which had already brought the most of his old helpmates to death or death's door. One tribe only in Chinna Kimédi still took up arms in defence of their olden usage. But warriors armed with battleaxes were no match for the muskets of Campbell's disciplined Sepoys. They fled, and the burning of a village, hard though it seemed, not only frightened the rebels into speedy submission, but also emboldened the Khánd chiefs throughout the country to side openly with the Government in its onslaught on the savagery of their countrymen. Marching into Jaipur, Campbell found the Khánds of Bandári anxious at last to make their peace with the British Agent. Their Meriahs were given up, and their chiefs took the needful pledge, receiving in return their captured grain, and a handsome gift of money towards the rebuilding of their ruined huts. Nor would the penitents take leave of their new friends, until Campbell had marked out a new site for their village, some way off from the scene of those bloody rites which they now sought to banish even from their memories. So widely, indeed, had spread the influence of the new teaching, that, out of two hundred and twenty Khánd villages, one only had witnessed a human sacrifice since the date of Campbell's last visit.

Once more, in the cold season of 1853, did Campbell resume his beneficent labours. Wherever he or his colleagues went, the tokens of a great success were now visible. Young girls were growing up among the child-slaying tribes of Chinna Kimédi. Old opponents flocked in with their few remaining Meriahs to show the Agent of the Great Company how faithfully they had kept their word. Tribes hitherto unvisited eagerly took the pledge, rejoicing to find that they too had not been forgotten. A little traffic had already begun to flow between the villages scattered along the newly-opened roads. The old abomination of Meriah sacrifices, grown yearly rarer, was fast fading into a dark dream of the past. But against the withering climate of those wild regions about the upper Mahánadi no Englishmen could battle long. In the spring of 1854 Colonel Campbell, worn out by repeated attacks of fever, made over the agency to Macvicar, bearing away with

himself the grateful prayers of his new allies, the thanks of the Government he had served so well, and the hearty regrets of Lord Dalhousie at the cause of his forced retirement from the hill-tracts of Orissa.*

Another province had lately lost the services of a benefactor not less worthy of remembrance. Colonel Dixon, indeed, had but followed up in Mairwára the good work begun by Colonel Hall, much as Ovans had followed Outram in the task of civilizing the Bhil tribes of Kándésh. The Mairs of Mairwára, a long and narrow strip of hill and jungle adjoining Ajmir and dividing Mewár from Márwár, were a race of robbers by profession and practice, who murdered their own daughters, sold their mothers, and waged perpetual warfare against the lives and property of their Rajput neighbours. In 1821, when their country passed under our rule, Captain Hall of the Bengal Army was empowered to take these lawless savages in hand. Under his strong but mild and judicious sway, which lasted fourteen years, they gradually settled down into habits of social order and moral improvement. The robber gangs were hunted down by their own kinsfolk enlisted as soldiers and policemen into the service of their new masters. The old blood-feuds and trials by ordeal were replaced by a system of justice suited to the needs of a primitive people; a *panchâyat* or court of village elders settling all cases except crimes of the worst sort. The people were encouraged to raise their own crops and to trade in the fruits of their own toil instead of plundering their neighbours' lands. Before Hall left his post to recruit his broken health, the Mairs had been well-nigh weaned from the practice of selling women and putting girl-children to an untimely death.†

In Captain Dixon of the Bengal Artillery, Sir Charles Metcalfe in 1835 selected a fit successor to Colonel Hall. For more than twelve years Dixon laboured single-handed, save for the help of a few native underlings, to build up the fabric whose foundations had been thus carefully laid. He saw at once that in such a country, exposed to frequent droughts, a regular supply of water was the main thing needful for agricultural progress. With the sanction and the help of his own Government, he set his people to work at digging tanks and wells and throwing up embankments for the proper storage and distribution of water among the trim terraces that began to cover the hill-sides. By small advances of money he encouraged the Mairs to clear the jungle on all sides

* Campbell; Trotter. † Kaye; Marshman.

and to raise abundant harvests from fields no longer barren. When these labours had borne visible fruit in the transformation of mere robbers into thriving peasants, Dixon's next effort was to found a permanent home in Mairwára for the trade which thus far had sought it only as a rare and hurried visitor. At the end of three months a new city, pertinently called Nayanagar,* peopled with immigrant Baniyas and Mahajans from neighbouring districts, had opened its bazaar for traffic to the wondering Mairs, who were slow at first to avail themselves of the boon thus set before them. In due time the new city was surrounded by a wall, within which some two thousand settlers were soon plying a secure and profitable trade. Meanwhile, Dixon himself spared no pains and begrudged no sacrifice of personal comfort in furtherance of a work for which his sweetest reward was the knowledge of a great and lasting success. Before he left the country he had trained up a school of native assistants, imbued with much of their master's spirit and well fitted to work out the details of his benevolent schemes.†

The well-wooded, well-watered uplands of Maisúr in Southern India furnish another instance of the good which an able, upright English ruler may accomplish by means of his strong personal influence over the people committed to his charge. The kingdom of Maisúr, as handed back after the fall of Tippu in 1799 to the dynasty which Haidar Ali had supplanted, still covered a surface of 28,000 square miles, peopled by about three millions, mostly of Hindu race or religion. Under the able Brahman Vázir, Purnia, to whom General Wellesley entrusted the details of civil government, the country enjoyed unwonted peace and happiness for the next ten years. In 1810, the young Rajah, a boy of fifteen, took the reins of power into his own hands, squandered in a few years all the treasure that Purnia had amassed, and misgoverned his people with a recklessness which in 1825 provoked Sir Thomas Munro, then Governor of Madras, to threaten him in the plainest terms with the forfeiture of his sovereign rights if he did not speedily mend his ways. In spite of all warnings and remonstrances the incorrigible Rajah pursued his evil courses until his people in 1831 rose against him in open rebellion. Its suppression by our own troops brought about the suppression of him whose conduct had provoked it. In accordance with the treaty of Lord Wellesley's own granting, Lord W. Bentinck put forth a hand of power to rescue Maisúr from prolonged misrule. King

* Anglicé "New Town." † Dixon's "Mairwára"; Kaye.

Krishnarâj lost his throne, but retained his title, and might still enjoy life moderately in his own palace on a pension reckoned at fourteen lakhs of rupees, or £140,000 a year. The civil government in 1834 passed into the hands of an English Commission headed by Colonel Mark Cubbon, another of those soldier-statesmen whose good deeds "smell sweet and blossom in the dust" of bygone days. "A man of noble heart and dignified presence," says one of his successors in the same post,* Colonel Cubbon already knew something of the people among whom he was to live and labour for the next twenty-six years. Long before the close of a career rich in peaceful victories, he had raised Maisûr in respect of good government to a level with any province in British India. What the Lawrence brothers were doing for the Panjâb, he had done already for the province committed to his fatherly care. The rite of Satti was forbidden; the old transit duties and a crowd of petty taxes were abolished;† public works were pushed forward with a liberal hand. The whole process of civil and criminal justice underwent a scathing reform. The Mohammadan classes were encouraged to settle down to agricultural pursuits. The reduced taxation stimulated trade, and the revenue under Cubbon's careful management rose steadily from forty-four to eighty-two lakhs, or £820,000. Well might Lord Dalhousie speak of results like these as honourable to the British name, and as reflecting the highest credit on General Cubbon and the officers who worked under him. Nor is it wonderful that the name of Sir Mark Cubbon has become a household word among the people who still reap the benefits of his bygone rule.‡

Twice in Lord Hardinge's time had the deposed Rajah pleaded in vain for restoration to his throne. Lord Hardinge gave no heed to the prayer of a prince who had proved much more of a hindrance than a help to the Chief Commissioner of Maisûr, and in whose conduct Cubbon saw no guarantee for his country's future well-doing. Again the persevering Rajah pressed his suit upon Lord Dalhousie, who, after careful weighing of arguments

* Bowring's "Eastern Experiences."

† Among the 769 petty taxes thus swept away were taxes on marriage, on incontinency, on a child being born, on its being named, on its head being shaved. The people of one village were taxed because their ancestors failed to find the stray horse of a Pâligâr or petty chief. In the Nagar district whoever passed a particular spot without keeping his hands close to his side had to pay a tax.—Maisûr Administration Report for 1872, quoted in Malleson's "Native States of India."

‡ Bowring; Marshman; Thornton's "Gazetteer."

and evidence, decided that his Highness had no claim to reinstatement, whether on account of the original treaty made with himself alone for his own life, or of any marked change for the better in his general conduct, of which General Cubbon had little good to report. As for the treaty, it is enough to say that Lord Wellesley had carefully struck out of it all reference to the Rajah's heirs and successors; while the Rajah's character was such that most of his own countrymen dreaded the bare thought of his return to power.*

Such men, however, as Cubbon and Dixon worked under easier conditions than those which hampered a British Resident at Lucknow, Baroda, or Haidarabád. As a rule the Resident at a Native Court had no direct voice in the management of public affairs. His personal influence for good depended mainly on his success in keeping himself carefully in the background. He could only further the policy of his own Government by the tact and firmness shown in his private intercourse with the Native Minister of the day. His zeal for the public welfare had to restrain itself within the bounds of diplomatic prudence, of a just regard for the rights, the privileges, even the pride of the prince whose policy he might seek in some points to control. Sleeman at Lucknow and Fraser at Haidarabád were alike powerless to arrest the march of misrule and wild disorder in the realms of Wájid Ali and the Nizam. At Baroda, the capital of the Marátha Gaikwars, the high-souled Outram waged fierce war to little purpose against the organized corruption, or *Khatpat*, as the natives called it, which tainted every branch of the Native Government. He had tracked its slimy course from Baroda even into the high places of Bombay. Single-handed, against a host of secret foes, in spite of ill-health and of cold looks from Bombay, he strove hard to unmask and overthrow a system of intrigue which dared everything, from the plundering of a wealthy widow under forms of law, to the buying of secret intelligence from high officers of the Bombay Government. But the heads of that Government mistrusted his discretion, or took alarm at his zeal in a business hard to unravel, and dangerous even to touch. So in November, 1851, they drove the noblest of their public servants to resign his post on plea of sickness, while the commission of inquiry whose help he had vainly asked for, proceeded to cover up the scandals he had well-nigh succeeded in laying bare.

In the following year, however, Lord Falkland received from the

* Bowring.

India House a calm, but unequivocal, lecture on the harsh proceedings of his Government towards an officer of Outram's acknowledged worth. His lordship's reasons were weighed and found wanting. A timely reprimand for disrespectful language would, it was pointed out, have answered his purpose much better than a hasty dismissal. On Colonel Outram's return to India a fitting place must be found for one to whose zeal, energy, and success in conducting a difficult inquiry the Court of Directors bore admiring witness. Nor did Outram's noble efforts quite fall through, for the Gaikwár was presently bidden to get rid of the ministers whose cunning had proved no match for the late Resident's upright, clear-seeing strength of purpose.*

In the Maratha States of Gwáliár and Indór, each governed by a Regency in the name of its boy-sovereign, the respective Residents could keep on writing complacent reports of fair progress making in the right direction. The peace of Rájputána remained unbroken by aught more serious than a passing quarrel between the Rána of Udaipur and his nobles. For a few months of 1849 Nágpur was troubled by an armed rising of the friends and followers of one Appa Sahib, a pretender to the Nágpur throne. A few hundred troops of the Nizam's Contingent sufficed to hunt down and disperse the bands of Rohilla mercenaries, who had left the Nizam's country to seek new fields of plunder in Nágpur.

Within the Company's own dominions peace, order, and contentment, with few exceptions, continued to prevail. Between Maisúr and the western coast stretch the hills and lowlands of Malabar, which the fall of Tippu converted into a British province. Among its varied inhabitants were the Mápilas, or "children of Mocha," sprung from an old Arab tribe which had settled there in the eighth or ninth century after Christ. Their fiery nature gave a fanatic colouring to their Mohammadan creed, and made them at times a terror and a nuisance to their more peaceful neighbours. Even under British rule their fierce fanaticism could not always be kept within bounds. One savage outbreak occurred in 1843. Again, in August 1849, a band of Mápilas crowned a long course of robbery and murder by seizing a pagoda near Calicut, and slaying a Brahman priest on his own altar. Two companies of Madras Sepoys were sent to dislodge them. Instead of waiting for the attack, some fifteen desperadoes rushed yelling down the hill, sword in hand, upon more than twice their number,

* Trotter; Goldsmid's "Life of Outram."

led by Ensign Wyse. Sepoy courage quailed before so fierce an onset, and poor Wyse was hacked to pieces with the few who stood by him. Captain Watt and the rest of his Sepoys shut themselves up in the Magistrate's Cutcherry,* pending the arrival of white troops from Kananór. At last, on the 4th of September, Major Dennis brought two companies of the 94th Foot up to another Mápila stronghold at Argídipúram. Again the fanatics, to the number of sixty-four, tried the effect of a sudden charge; but the Europeans were not to be so easily daunted. After a few minutes' savage fighting, one only of the fanatics was left alive, while three of our men lay dead, and nearly a dozen, including the commander, had wounds of some kind to show.*

Two years later another wild burst of Mápila fury at Kálátúr resulted in a similar collapse. Once more our sturdy English soldiers had to retrieve the shortcomings of their Sepoy comrades, who fled like sheep before the rush of a few savages armed with spears and knives. In excuse for their cowardice, it must be said that to their childlike fancies the Mápila fanatics were devils, not in metaphor but in fact, against whom no mortal man could fight with impunity. Of the nineteen who now flung themselves on British bayonets not one escaped the death which assured them an easy entrance into Mahomet's paradise. Undaunted by their brethren's fate, fresh gangs of Mápilas ere long carried dismay and havoc into every spot unguarded by British troops. Deep-rooted differences of race and religion inflamed their sense of wrongs inflicted by rack-renting landlords, greedy usurers, and a corrupt police, and made them an easy prey to cunning teachers, who dignified the plundering and slaying of rich Hindus with the name of a holy war against unbelievers. Some of them were seized and imprisoned by the magistrate of Calicut; others were slain in fair fight by the armed servants of a wealthy Nair, who, a few days afterwards, lost his own life at the hands of fresh assailants. An attempt of the magistrates to punish the Tangal or high priest of the Mápilas provoked his followers to renewed outrages, which our troops were not always in time to forestall. At length, in April 1852, the Tangal stole away with all his family from the pursuit of British justice. A number of ringleaders were afterwards brought to trial by the new Commissioner, Mr. Strange, and beyond one slight outbreak in the autumn, nothing more was heard of Mápila devilry for some years to come.†

* Trotter; Thornton's "Gazetteer."

† Trotter. In September, 1855, Mr. Connolly, the able Collector of Calicut, fell

Meanwhile, the rich and prosperous city of Bombay had become the scene of a religious riot, which for a time exposed the lives, the property, and the personal honour of the Pársi citizens to the merciless assaults of Mohammadan mobs, fired by a fancied insult to their faith. A harmless lithograph of Mahomet in a Pársi newspaper was the spark which set ablaze the inflammable fabric of Moslem bigotry and self-conceit. It seemed intolerable that the infidel followers of Zardusht should dare to publish such a caricature of the great Arab prophet. Some one—perhaps a Mohammadan—had posted the hateful picture by the door of the great Mosque. In spite of their Kázi or chief law officer, a crowd of raging Musalmans, setting up the war cry of *Din, Din,** rushed forth on November 17, 1851, to wreak their revenge on the unbelieving swine with any weapons that came to hand. In half an hour, before the police could overawe the rioters, they had plundered all the Pársi shops, and ill-used the Pársi people that came in their way. For some weeks the presence of English soldiers in aid of the police seemed to allay the ferment born, no doubt, of a great religious festival.† But on November 22, Mohammadan bigotry burst forth again in a series of wanton outrages on the Pársis and their worship, and of violent attacks upon the police. The defiling of temples and the breaking into cemeteries were only checked by a free display of armed force. After many of the rioters had been wounded or taken prisoners, the one-sided quarrel was at length appeased by the joint efforts of Native and English residents in Bombay. On the reading of an apology by the Pársi editor for the insult laid to his charge, the Kázi, in the name of his fellow-worshippers, declared himself fully satisfied, and promised thenceforward to keep the peace. Thus ended one of the many outbreaks of religious zeal which mark the yearly course of Indian history, whether the scene be laid at Lucknow or Banáras, at Haidarabád or in Malabar.

Another of these outbreaks, which occurred at Boláram, not far from Haidarabád, in 1855, may serve to illustrate the danger of attacking religious zealots with their own weapons. On Sep-

hacked to pieces in his own verandah by a party of Mápilas, within hearing of his own wife.

* "The faith."

† The *Moharram* festival is kept yearly for several days in memory of Hasan and Hosain, the martyr sons of Ali, Mahomet's true successor in the eyes of Shiah Musalmans. In India both Shiahs and Sunnies, the two great divisions of Islam, join in keeping the festival.

tember 21, a noisy train of Mohammadans, keeping the festival of the Moharram,* passed along the European lines in defiance of orders issued by the commanding brigadier, Colin Mackenzie of Kábul renown. In reply to his messengers they only sang the louder, and blew yet harsher blasts upon their horns. As the procession passed his own bungalow, Mackenzie lost his temper, rushed out upon the merry-makers, carried off their flags, and wrathfully bade them begone. For the moment his boldness seemed to overawe the crowd, which turned off elsewhither. But he had soon to pay dear for his indiscretion. In less than half an hour a howling mob, led by some troopers of the 3rd Nizam's Cavalry, broke into Mackenzie's compound, left him for dead with a dozen sword cuts, wounded one of his officers, fired into his house among the frightened ladies, and finished by assaulting every white man or woman who crossed their path. For the cruel outrage which drove a worthy, if over-zealous, officer home for some years to England a battered wreck, the ringleaders were mildly punished by the civil law. For the open mutiny of nearly a whole regiment, and the violent deeds of many among them, the Governor-General held Mackenzie himself in large measure to blame. And so he exacted no heavier punishment than the dismissal of every native officer, save those few who had either kept away from the scene of riot, or had really striven to restore discipline and protect their officers from open insult.†

During the year 1850, the Nága and Kuki tribes in the furthest corner of Assam were engaged in plundering their neighbours, in fighting with each other, and otherwise defying the British power. Before the year's end, troops were sent to overawe them. Erelong, the Kuki chiefs were brought to terms, and gave hostages for good behaviour; but the Nágas still held out behind defences too strong for infantry alone, amidst forests where drill and percussion muskets availed but little against ill-armed savages fighting bravely on their own ground. After some months of fitful warfare and the capture of a few of their chief stockades, these tribes also yielded to the stronger power; and before the fierce summer heats had fairly set in, the troops employed against them had done with their tiresome work.

On the Panjáb frontier raids and forays were of necessity things of yearly recurrence. For ages past the hill-men of the border, "perched on their crags and peaks like eagles in their eyries,"‡

* See note † on preceding page. † Trotter.

‡ Lord Lawrence's letter to the *Times*, Nov. 18, 1878.

had swooped down for plunder on the dwellers in the neighbouring plains and valleys. No civilized government could leave its own subjects to be robbed and harried at pleasure by foes like these, however hard it might be to wean them from their unpleasant ways. In the last days of 1850, a body of Waziri freebooters raided into Bannu and attacked some villages near the Gurnatti Pass. The brave defence made by the villagers themselves, with the help of a few outpost guards, left Taylor's irregulars only the task of hunting the baffled robbers back to their own hills. In the following February some 300 of the same tribe were foiled in their attempt to plunder the baggage of the 2nd Panjáb Infantry by the steady courage of seventy troopers and Sepoys, who held their ground until more troops came to their help. Further north the Afridis about Kohát and the Khaibaris beyond Pesháwar were raising hands of outrage against all who came within their reach, until many Englishmen sighed for the days when Ranjit's stern general, Avitabile, hung every Khaibari found prowling near Pesháwar.

Beyond strengthening the guards of police and irregulars along the Panjáb marches little was done that summer to chastise the insolence of these highland thieves and murderers. But in October, 1851, the Miranzai valley, flanking the Waziri hills on the west, was garrisoned by a picked force of Coke's Panjábis. About the same time, a stronger force of mixed troops, under Sir Colin Campbell, was preparing to march from Pesháwar against the Momand clans of Michni, a town and district lying on the Kábul river, under the shadow of the Yusafzai hills. These people, like their kinsmen of Kohát and Bannu, had lately carried their thievish outrages to an unbearable height. By the end of October the Momands were flying before Campbell's swift advance. Their forts and villages on the plain were soon destroyed, and a new fort built by our engineers ere long commanded the neighbouring country. But the Momand chief still defied his pursuers from a stronghold further off, and a fitful guerilla warfare was kept up during the cold season, while Colonel Mackeson, who had succeeded George Lawrence in the civil charge of the Pesháwar valley, was trying to talk the hill-chiefs of that frontier into becoming respect for our rule.

In March, 1852, Campbell was marching against another enemy—the Yusafzai—who had abetted the fanatic highlanders of Swát in their attack on a party of Lumsden's Guides. After a sharp fight, in which our men lost rather heavily, the hill-men

came to terms, and sent in hostages for the payment of a heavy fine. But the border tribes would not keep still. From Kohát to Pesháwar they pursued their old game of robbery and murder. During the most of April, Campbell was either chasing the Momands away from his new outpost at Shabkadr, or retracing his own steps to Pesháwar, teased all the while by foes as keen as the summer flies that buzz about a horse's head. The next month saw him leading a strong force into the Swát highlands, north of Pesháwar and Michni. The capture of Prámgarh by Coke's and Lumsden's men, and the rout of a large body of Swáttis by Campbell himself, brought the campaign to an early and successful close. On June 1, Campbell's troops got back to their cantonments, and shortly afterwards Mackeson succeeded in winning the Momand and Swátti clans into a treaty of peace and good behaviour, which was kept with unwonted faithfulness for many months to come. Sádat Khán, indeed, the Momand chief of Lálpúra, still from the shelter of his own hills defied the British power, which he accused of taxing his clansmen on our side of the border for the lands they had formerly held rent free. "When we found ourselves unable to pay those taxes"—he wrote to the Commissioner—"you attacked and expelled us from our very birthright. Was this consistent with the justice and liberality of that glorious Government of which you vaunt yourself a member? Was it in keeping with the honour and dignity of so great and powerful a nation as yours? . . . . . As for ourselves, since you are resolved to make us die of starvation, we have chosen the manlier method, of dying sword in hand." Whatever show of truth these words may have contained, certain it is that most of the Momands made up their minds to live on the terms prescribed by the British Agent; nor did Sádat Khán himself give further annoyance to a Government whose power for coercion he had already learned to respect.*

* Trotter.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VICTORIES OF PEACE.

Few public officers in any country have toiled so hard and so continuously as many a Governor-General of British India has toiled in the faithful discharge of his regular duties. In this respect Lord Dalhousie had no superior, and very few equals, in the mental force that quickened his untiring industry and made it fruitful for the public weal. No viceroy ever spared himself so little in his country's service, or succeeded so well in overcoming his bodily weakness by sheer might of genius and a commanding will. His very travels in quest of health were marked by increasing devotion to public business. In April, 1850, only a few weeks after his return to Calcutta from a lengthened tour in the Panjáb, Dalhousie set off again for the Upper Provinces, leaving Sir John Littler to fill his place in the Government of Bengal. The peace which had reigned around him had given free play to the active intellect of a ruler bent on mastering every detail of his work, and jealous almost to a fault of any attempt to evade his orders or dispute his power. All through that year under his watchful control was measure after measure framed or carried forward for improving the State-machinery, for lightening the burdens on Indian trade, and furthering the social and industrial progress of the country at large. The abolition of all inland duties, the throwing open of the whole coasting trade of India, the establishment of small-cause courts in each Presidency, of steamers on the Indus, of tolls on the great highways already hastening to bind new provinces with old; railways actually begun on both sides of India; a liberal outlay on roads and canals; the laying down of an experimental "lightning-post" —as the natives called the electric telegraph—under the skilful guidance of Dr. O'Shaughnessy—such were among the peaceful achievements that marked the third year of Dalhousie's rule. In the summer, from his cool retreat at Chini in the heart of the

Himalayas, afterwards, during his public progress through Upper India, the Governor-General overlooked, guided, or controlled the workings of administrative energy, whether in its highest or lowest spheres; now issuing a final order for the improvement of the public Service, anon sanctioning the employment of commissariat cattle to fill the plunging-baths of British regiments.* There was hardly a province in all India which the great Proconsul failed to explore in person during the eight years of his rule.

In the sphere of home legislation and public enterprise Lord Dalhousie's Government trod firmly along the path opened out by Lord W. Bentinck and Lord Hardinge. That rulers existed only for the good of the ruled was the guiding principle of that Government, a principle which inspired alike its failures and its successes. To do away with abuses, to redress apparent wrongs, to deal equal justice to all classes, creeds, and races, to plant everywhere the seeds of a higher civilization, to scatter abroad the full blessings of a wise, just, and peaceful rule, were the ends which Lord Dalhousie strove his best to further in undoubting accordance with the ruling ideas of his age and country. One of his earliest achievements on this line was the law which consummated Lord Hardinge's efforts to protect private persons from the forfeitures awarded under the old Hindu codes.

About the beginning of 1850 his Council passed an Act enforcing in the case of converts from Hinduism the righteous principle, that no man shall be robbed of his right to property on account of any change in his religious creed. Under the old law every such convert incurred a kind of civil outlawry, became an outcast from his family and his race, a Pariah stript of all rights or property inherited from a Hindu forefather. His very wife was forbidden to cleav to him; his children were commanded to shun him as one accur d of gods and men. But Lord Dalhousie plainly declared that the State was bound "to keep in its own hands the right of regulating succession to property"; and the new Act secured the convert from the secular penalties attached to his revolt against ancestral usage. An outcast from his kin, his social fellows, he might still be; but of his rights as a citizen and a housefather none could thenceforth rob him with impunity.†

If the orthodox Hindus of Bengal and Madras denounced this reform as an act of sheer tyranny, still louder and fiercer was the outcry which a few years later they raised against Dalhousie's Government, for its attempt to redress another grievance born of the

* Trotter. † Trotter; Kaye.

conflict between ancient usage and modern ideas. The re-marriage of Hindu widows was a thing utterly detestable in the eye of Hindu law. To the great mass of Hindu men and women it still ranked among the gravest of social and moral crimes. These slaves of time-old custom, who had not yet done bewailing the suppression of Satti, and clamouring at the light already glimmering through the mental darkness of the Zanána, held it foul shame and sacrilege for any woman, however young—and many a widow might be a mere child—to exchange the dreary degraded lot of an Indian widow for that of a twice-wedded wife. No such thing, in fact, as a second marriage on the woman's part was known to Hindu law, nor had the offspring of such a marriage any kind of legal existence. Such unions, however, had already taken place, and some of the more enlightened Hindus besought the Government to make them valid by adjusting the old law to the new facts. In a petition signed by thousands of natives it was urged that perpetual widowhood was nowhere expressly commanded in the Hindu scriptures. To all such pleadings the orthodox party opposed an array of texts which made yet more strongly in support of their own contention. But no amount of legal or scriptural sanctions could turn the Government aside from any reform demanded on the grounds of manifest justice and the public good. In due time a Bill was laid before the Supreme Council "to remove all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows." Pressure of business and other causes delayed somewhat the progress of the Bill; but a few months after Dalhousie's retirement it became law.*

Lord Hardinge had done his best to erase Satti from the list of native usages extant in his day. But the burning of widows, even with their own consent, on the husband's funeral pile was an institution which died hard, especially in some of the Rajput States, where high-born ladies still held it a point of honour to be burned alive in order to smooth the way of their dead lords to heaven. In Udaipur, Alwar, and Bikanir, Lord Dalhousie's interference took the form of threats, which the native princes and chiefs had the wisdom to accept as positive commands. In one or two cases the interference went still further. In 1852 the petty Rajput State of Dongarpur passed under British management during the childhood of its future Ráwal. The reported Satti of a Rajput widow roused all the pride of a strong ruler in the indignant Governor-General. A special inquiry issued in the

* Kaye.

doom of three years' imprisonment for the Thákur's son who took part in the forbidden sacrifice, as well as the Brahman priests who conducted it. The Thákur himself who allowed the Satti was punished by the forfeiture of half his revenue for the same term of years. By such measures Dalhousie impressed upon the princes and people of India the danger of defying the Paramount Power.*

Against a far more pestilent evil of his day the great Marquis waged vigorous war. Some eighty years earlier Warren Hastings had striven after his own stern fashion to hunt down the Dakaits or gang-robbers of Bengal, who had driven a roaring trade in rapine and murder during the long reign of anarchy and armed strife which marked the gradual disruption of the Moghal Empire. These bandits by profession, and even by birth, were mostly members of this or that robber-caste bound together by hereditary ties, by the use of secret signs and a secret language, and even, like the Thags, by a common observance of set religious rites. Like the brigands in some parts of modern Europe, they throve upon the fears, the weakness, or the complicity of their peaceful neighbours. Setting out by night in gangs of thirty or forty against some village marked out for plunder, they returned home laden with spoils, a fourth of which was usually reserved for the Zamindár on whose lands or with whose connivance they had got ready for their evil work. In most cases the village headman, and even the Thánadár or chief constable, came in for their several shares of the booty, on the residue of which the Dakaits would live in comfortable idleness for many months.†

Had Hastings been free to strike, as he would have done, at the root of these lawless enterprises, he would have made each Zamindár directly punishable for a gang-robbery planned or perpetrated on his estate. But his hands being tied by his own council, he had to content himself with issuing stern decrees against the Dakaits; with levying fines on the villages that harboured them; and with trying to improve a corrupt and inefficient police. The evil, which he might have suppressed by a timely exercise of humane severity, lived on to vex the soul of his great successor in the middle of the following century. From time to time bands of Dakaits kept on harassing the merchants and the peasantry in various parts of India. It was not till 1837 that a serious effort was made by Sir Charles Metcalfe, then Governor of the North-West Provinces, to abate a nuisance nourished and made strong

* Arnold. † Kaye; Trotter's "Warren Hastings."

by the greed of knavish landholders and pilfering agents of the law. In the next year but one, Lord Auckland entrusted Colonel Sleeman, the suppressor of Thaggi, with the kindred task of putting down Dakaity also in the plains of Upper India; while a separate officer, Mr. Dampier, undertook the same duties in Lower Bengal. To ensure the full success of Sleeman's labours, an Act was passed in 1843 which empowered the courts to punish with due severity any prisoner proved to have belonged to any gang of Dakaits in any part of the country.* In this way alone could the difficulty of obtaining witnesses to a particular act of robbery be overcome. Another Act provided for the recapture and safe custody of Dakaits who had escaped from jails in the Native States.

Under such conditions the work of hunting down Dakaits went vigorously forward. There was no lack of informers against their fellow-scoundrels. Nor were the magistrates slow to convict offenders. In a few years the main body of Dakaits, the great robber clans and brotherhoods, were broken up and scattered abroad. But the plague of Dakaity did not die out. New gangs, composed in part of old robbers, partly of men driven to robbery by the loss of lands or other means of livelihood, began to trouble the peace of Lower Bengal and to swarm around Calcutta itself, to such an extent that in 1852, to use Lord Dalhousie's own words, "a feeling of general insecurity has arisen in the minds of the people of these districts," namely, Bardwán, Húghli, and Kishnagarh. Another statute had to be passed amending the doubtful language of former Acts, so as to keep within the meshes of the law all gangs of robbers of whatever class or character.† A good Special Commissioner for the suppression of Dakaity was easily found in Mr. Wauchope, the able and zealous magistrate of Húghli, who was known to have a shrewd eye for detecting a Dakait and a faithful memory for old offenders. His very first campaign against these ruffians bore fruit in the capture or dispersion of many large gangs, some of whose members were seized within the capital itself. By the end of 1852 the recorded cases of Dakaity had diminished by one-half, and the Dakait leaders, hunted out of Bengal, could find shelter only in the small French settlement of Chandarnagar.‡

If the crime itself was not yet extinguished on British ground,

* Act XXIV. of 1843.

† The Acts of 1843 were held to apply only to hereditary and professional gangs.

‡ Kaye.

it lost so much of its former virulence in Bengal, dwindling from a popular institution into a passing visitant urged by hard times and bad seasons, that ten years afterwards Lord Elgin's Government resolved to do away with the special machinery devised for its suppression.

Among the peaceful achievements of Lord Dalhousie's rule not the least noteworthy was the Act for establishing trial by jury throughout British India. A Bill to that effect was read in Council for the first time in October, 1849. In the beginning of the next year it became law. Thenceforth any one charged with crime before a sessions-judge might claim to be tried by a jury of five or seven persons "of reputed intelligence, respectability, and consideration, between the ages of twenty-five and fifty years." If the judge approved of the verdict found by a majority of the jury, he would proceed to act thereon in due form; if he disagreed, the case, with his own comments, would be sent up to a higher court, which for due cause shown might order a new trial. The new system, based on English usage, and already tried in some parts of India, would commend itself, it was hoped, to the native mind by the marked resemblance it bore in some points to the old Hindu institution of the village Panchâyat or Council of Elders.

One of the first natives tried under this Act was the Lála Joti Parsád, the great contractor whose wealth, good name, and wide-working influence had kept our troops supplied with food, and the Government itself at times with money, through all the chief campaigns of the past decade. On his accounts for that period the Lála claimed from the Government a debt of more than half a million pounds. Misled by some of his military advisers, the Governor-General resolved not only to dispute the claim, but to drag the claimant into a criminal court. On the 27th of March, 1851, the trial of Joti Parsád and some of his helpmates, for a series of illegal frauds upon the Government, began at Agra before Mr. Brown, the sessions-judge, and a mixed jury of five townsmen. Twelve days were taken up in a process which brought out little else than the arbitrary nature of the course pursued by the local magistrate, and the futility of examining witnesses already twice forsworn. In a telling speech for the defence Mr. Lang, a skilful barrister and a brilliant journalist, assailed the whole proceeding with the merciless wit of a pleader strong in the knowledge of his opponents' weakness, and keen to amuse himself with the humorous aspects of a scene which furnished much fo[illegible]r

laughter-moving satire.* After making wild fun of the whole business Mr. Lang dealt with the charges themselves, urging that the great contractor could not be held answerable for every little fraud committed by every underling who took his pay. Joti Parsád's known wealth, and the many services he had done the State in its greatest need, were also pleaded as incompatible with the notion of his guilt. Finally, Mr. Lang called up two of the chief commissariat officers, whose glowing praise of the accused confirmed all that Lord Gough had written, and other officers summoned by the prosecution had been forced to acknowledge on his behalf.†

In less than one hour after the defence was over the jury gave out their verdict. Joti Parsád and his fellow-prisoners were acquitted on every count of the main charge. Other charges which still lay against them the Government wisely refrained from pressing. It was time indeed for Lord Dalhousie to give up what most men deemed the ungenerous persecution of a man to whom British India owed so largely alike in gratitude and rupees. Whatever show of guilt might have been traced to his door, a criminal process against such a creditor, a process founded on evidence which a later inquiry, conducted by Sir Robert Barlow, set aside as weak or worthless, seemed to be at least a blunder, if nothing worse. If the Lála's hands were not overclean, it was open to the Government to make that clear by means of the suit pending between the two parties in the Supreme Court. In spite, however, of all Mr. Lang's jibes and jeers, Lord Dalhousie might take comfort in knowing that a Company's jury had done substantial justice to a native gentleman arraigned by a Company's prosecutor before a Company's judge.‡

Meanwhile another measure of reform had been laid aside in deference to the violent outcry raised against it by the Europeans of Calcutta and Bombay. The Bill which Mr. Drinkwater Bethune laid before the Supreme Council in 1849 sought to follow up the "Black Act" of 1836, which made our countrymen amen-

* "The scene," he said, "recalled one of those days on board ship when pork in one shape or another was all one could get for dinner. Pork, all pork, typified the present suit. He stood in a Company's Court beside a Company's prosecutor, pleading before a Company's judge, and awaiting the verdict of a Company's jury. . . . . It was an old charge against the Company that they accused people of crime merely [illegible]nvict them of being wealthy. The charges against his client had utterly broken [illegible] The case was gutted. He was like a clergyman called in to console a corpse, [illegible]*Agra Messenger*, April, 1851.

[illegible]r. ‡ Ibid.

able in civil suits to the higher courts of the East India Company, by an act empowering the Company's magistrates and judges to try European criminals on any charge save one of murder. A measure so just in spirit, so needful to correct the patent unfairness of a system under which an Englishman accused of petty theft at Peshâwar might shift his place of trial to the Supreme Court of Calcutta, was hailed by the bulk of English residents and journalists in the latter city with the loud-tongued fury of a privileged class that brooked no equality before the law with the millions of their fellow-subjects. It seemed intolerable that Englishmen whose fathers had conquered India should be forced to plead as prisoners in courts unfit already for the work they had to do. To set an Englishman charged with crime on a seeming level with a native was tantamount to lowering the master in the servant's eyes. You might as well banish Englishmen at once from India, as take away their birthright by leaving them at the mercy of corrupt and incompetent courts, ruled by officers too often ignorant of sound law, or too prone to follow the lead of their native assistants. Against Mr. Bethune himself the licence of invective soon rose into downright slander. The virulence of his opponents served their purpose, while it proved the weakness of their cause. Even if the district courts had deserved a little of the hard words flung against them, the surest way to improve their working was to bring them under the sway of public criticism by granting them equal jurisdiction over offenders of all classes, black or white. The growing power of the Anglo-Indian Press in the up-country towns would alone have furnished a practical safeguard against the dangers which Mr. Bethune's critics professed to fear. And it is worth remarking how small a part of the cry first raised in Calcutta was taken up by Europeans in the Upper Provinces, for which the new Bill had been specially designed.*

Mr. Bethune was more successful in another line, as the founder of a school for Hindu girls belonging to families of the middle classes. Following the path once trodden in vain by the enterprising Mrs. Wilson, he persuaded some of the wealthier Hindus to give their daughters the benefit of a schooling such as children in the lower classes had begun to enjoy. On the 7th of May, 1849, the new school opened with twenty-one pupils of tender age, placed under the charge of an English lady who, with the help of a native Pandit, was to teach them Bangâli, their mother-tongue, as much English as their fathers might choose, and, in the words of

* Trotter: Calcutta *Englishman*; *Friend of India*, &c.

Mr. Bethune's opening address, "a thousand feminine works and accomplishments with their needles in embroidery and fancy-work, in drawing, in many other things that would give them the means of adorning their own homes, and of supplying themselves with harmless and elegant employment." After a season of rough weather, caused by the bigotry of many opponents and the falling away of some timid friends, the new movement took firm hold of the native mind. By the end of May, 1850, the twenty-one pupils had grown into thirty-four; other schools on the same pattern were springing up under native auspices in various parts of Bengal; and the Government, encouraged by the marked success of a private venture, began taking its own measures in aid of a movement so fraught with social good for the women of India. After Mr. Bethune's untimely death, the school he had founded in Calcutta passed under the special charge of Lord Dalhousie himself, and in due time took its place among the institutions sanctioned by the Company.*

Another pioneer in another part of the same field was meanwhile doing noticeable work. Dr. Hunter, Surgeon to the Black Town of Madras, opened in 1850, at his own cost, a School of Arts, the first of its kind in India, for the purpose of spreading among the natives "a taste for the humanizing culture of the fine arts." In the following year he founded a School of Industry for "improving the manufacture of various articles of domestic and daily use." For this he may have found a model in the Government school established at Jabalpur in 1837 for the children of convicted Thags, and for those Thags who had escaped a worse doom by informing against their brother criminals. In 1855 the two schools founded by Dr. Hunter were taken over by the Government. The notion that India had aught to learn from England in respect of the fine arts might seem absurd in view of the art-treasures, the finely-wrought work in gold and silver and brass, the exquisite carvings in wood and ivory, the many-hued yet tasteful shawls and carpets, the gracefully flowing mosaics, the rich brocades, the delicate gold and silver lace, the earthenware bowls and pitchers modelled in shapes of pure classic beauty, which India contributed to the great world-fair holden in 1851 amid the trees and turf of Hyde Park. But in spite of such triumphs of artistic skill and culture, Indian art, however true and masterly within its own domain, lacks many of those higher qualities which proclaim the great sculptors, architects, painters,

* Trotter; Kaye.

and musicians of the West. In India, moreover, the production of art-work was still confined to particular castes and classes, who followed closely in their several lines the technical rules and practices handed down from their forefathers through ages past. Of a natural taste for art there was no lack among the people at large; but the liberal culture which might have served to strengthen and purify that taste, and perchance to develop new forms of artistic energy, was altogether wanting.*

To all such movements Lord Dalhousie lent the countenance of his name, his purse, or his authority. In extension of Mr. Bethune's schemes for improving the Hindu and Mohammadan colleges in Calcutta, he persuaded the India House to sanction his own designs for the founding of a Presidency College, in which all classes of the people might receive instruction, especially in English, on a higher scale than any furnished by the existing schools. His zealous support enabled James Thomason to carry out his great experiment in behalf of popular education. In 1850 the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces opened a certain number of Government schools, in eight of the thirty-one districts subject to his sway. To his active helpmate, Mr. Stewart Reid, he entrusted the duty of supervising the new system. At the end of three years nearly 37,000 pupils were learning their letters in 3,469 schools. So well had the experiment thus far answered, that Thomason's prayer for its extension was strongly seconded by the Governor-General in a letter urging the Court of Directors to apply the new methods of vernacular instruction to other provinces besides Hindustan.† In the populous province of Bengal, for instance, little had yet been done to improve the rude teaching of the *Patsháls* or indigenous schools, one of which might be found in every village where a Gúru, or village schoolmaster, could earn a few rupees a month by teaching half a dozen children to write a letter in Bangáli, to do a sum in simple arithmetic, and to copy out a few verses in praise of some Hindu god.‡

The answer which came from England outran the Governor-General's liveliest hopes. The memorable Despatch of July, 1854, issued by Sir Charles Wood, then President of the Board of Control, in harmony with the views propounded by Sir Charles Trevelyan, Dr. Duff, Mr. J. C. Marshman, and other men of like ex-

* "Indian Year Book for 1861."

† Hindustan, the "Hindu Land," was the old name of the vast plains watered by the Jamna and the Ganges.

‡ Bengal Education Report for 1859-60.

perience, contained, in Lord Dalhousie's own words, "a scheme of education for all India far wider and more comprehensive than the Local or the Supreme Governments could ever have ventured to suggest." This great Intellectual Charter, which left Dalhousie "nothing to desire," except the means of translating all its purposes into swiftly accomplished deeds, empowered him to organize a threefold system of popular instruction, rising from vernacular, and middle schools for every district, through Government colleges for more advanced pupils, up to an University in each of the three Presidencies. To every school brought under any form of Government control, a money grant in aid would be assigned. The colleges were to be affiliated to their respective universities. In each of the five great provinces of British India, a Director-General of Public Instruction, aided by a complete staff of Inspectors, was ere long engaged in building up the fabric whose foundations had been laid by the Despatch of 1854 on the ground prepared by Thomason and Dalhousie.*

So happy an issue to his own great experiment, Thomason himself had not lived to see. In September, 1853, the month that witnessed the untimely murder of Colonel Mackeson by an Afghán fanatic at Peshawar, the active and zealous Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces died, in his fiftieth year, at the very moment when one of the highest prizes open to a member of the Indian Civil Service came within his grasp. Even as he lay dying at Agra, the overland mail was bringing out the news of his selection for the Government of Madras, in the room of Sir Henry Pottinger. In terms of just regret the Governor-General announced the untimely death of one whose known talents, zeal, and honest worth had marked him out for the high position he had since exalted by his administrative skill, his wide knowledge of affairs, his clear judgement, courteous bearing, and large benevolence. That his zeal sometimes outran discretion, these pages have already shown. Nor can it be said that Thomason gave as much thought to the improvement of his judicial machinery as he did to the means of enlarging the public revenue, and to the making of roads and canals. There was more in him of the innovating zealot, of the dogmatic theorist, than of the large-hearted, many-sided statesman. But every one may allow with Lord Dalhousie, that even if Thomason "had left no other memorial of his public

* Among the new directors was William Arnold, a younger brother of Dr. Arnold's most famous son. His early death cut short the promise of a brilliant and useful career.

life behind him, his system of general vernacular education, which is all his own, would have sufficed to build up for him a noble and abiding monument of his earthly career."*

His place was filled by Mr. John Colvin, sometime secretary to Lord Auckland during the Afghán war, afterwards for several years Commissioner of the Tenasserim province. In the first year of his rule, on the 8th April, 1854, the new Lieutenant-Governor took a prominent part in the ceremony of opening the great canal in whose progress Thomason had betrayed so keen an interest. The main line of this noble water-way, designed alike for traffic and irrigation, had after seven years' continuous toil been finished by the same engineer, Colonel Cautley, who had first projected it sixteen years before. Ever since 1847, nothing had been wanting in aid of his great enterprise that money, zeal, and engineering skill could supply. Out of nearly a million and a half thus far spent upon the Ganges Canal, Lord Dalhousie's Government had contributed all but £170,000. No such work had ever yet been attempted on the same scale by any civilized nation. Its main stream alone, wrote Lord Dalhousie, "nearly equals the aggregate length of the four greatest canals in France. It greatly exceeds all the first-class canals of Holland put together," and its length of 525 miles is "fivefold greater than that of all the main lines of Lombardy united." Tapping the Ganges near Hardwár, and carried by an aqueduct 920 feet long across the Soláni river, it flows at an extreme depth of ten, and a breadth sometimes of a hundred and seventy feet down to Aligarh, where it parts into two great branches, one returning into the Ganges at Cawnpore, the other making for the Jamna at Hamirpur. Other branches were destined to increase its total length to more than eight hundred miles of main channel, whose waters serve to fertilize an average breadth of fifty miles. It was in a spirit of just pride that Lord Dalhousie regarded the successful execution and completion of so great a work as sufficing, "even if it stood alone, to signalize an Indian administration."†

Nor was the opening ceremony out of keeping with the occasion. On the morning appointed a vast crowd of people thronged about a certain spot near the Rurki aqueduct, under the shadow of the Himalayas, to see the waters of their holiest river turned into the bed of the great canal. After the reading of a special religious service, the Lieutenant-Governor, attended by a train of English gentlemen and one native prince, the young Mahárája

* Trotter; Marshman.

† Lord Dalhousie's "Minute"; Thornton's "Indian Public Works"; Kaye; Trotter.

of Gwáliár, went up to the top of the aqueduct, and presently, amidst the boom of guns, the crash of musketry, and the soul-stirring strains of the national anthem, the eight gates of the sluice were thrown open, and the long-imprisoned waters leapt thundering into their future bed. Cheer after cheer in honour of Colonel Cautley and his official chiefs burst forth from every British throat, while the long lines of natives on either bank took up the shouting in homage to their revered Ganga and threw themselves with fanatic eagerness into the broad, deep-rolling flood. At a grand dinner party given that evening, Mr. Colvin paid a grateful tribute to Colonel Cautley and the officers of the Ganges Canal. The under officers of the same department were duly feasted at their Colonel's own expense, and the day's proceedings closed with a show of fireworks that would have done credit to Calcutta, and a grand distribution of tickets for sweetmeats to the thousands of natives who had been employed in constructing the canal.

A few weeks later Cautley himself retired from the service. His departure from Calcutta was hailed by a salute from the guns of Fort William, a compliment specially decreed by Lord Dalhousie in a public order, which regretted the powerlessness of his Government to bestow other honours on the man to whose genius, skill, and energy was mainly due the completion within eight years of an undertaking which "already stands unequalled among works of its class and character throughout the world." The Queen's Government at home, however, could not entirely overlook the services thus strongly commended, and in due time the retired colonel of artillery was rewarded with a knighthood of the Bath, and later with the more substantial prize of a seat in the Indian Council.*

What Cautley and his engineers had thus been doing for the parched yet fertile plains of Hindustan, Colonel Arthur Cotton and his helpmates had done already for large tracts of country in Southern India. These tracts, the deltas of large rivers flowing down through the Eastern Ghâts into the Bay of Bengal, had once been covered with irrigation works, dams, tanks, canals, and so forth, constructed by Hindu rulers in the first centuries of our era. Most of these had gradually fallen into decay, and the once fruitful fields yielded a scant subsistence to a poor and thin population. As Civil Engineer in Tanjór in the days of Lord W. Bentinck, Colonel Cotton had achieved his first success by damming up the Kílarún at Siringham, and carrying the waters of the Kávari through a network of distributive channels over the adjacent

* Trotter.

plains. In the course of fifteen years the wilderness became a garden, the selling value of land in the Kávari delta had doubled, and the land-revenue of Tanjór had increased by nearly one-fifth, or little less than the £80,000 which the Madras Government had laid out on the works designed by Colonel Cotton.*

A like success rewarded Colonel Cotton's efforts to fertilize the deltas of the Godávari and the Kistna. Across the former river, at Dauleshwarám, he threw up a mighty "anicut," or dam, built of earth and stone, one hundred and thirty feet broad, and two miles and a half long, through which the stream was afterwards conducted by eight hundred miles of channels—some of them navigable—into the sea. So fruitful were his labours that in Lord Dalhousie's time the Godávari works had repaid the cost of making them, and the great district of Rájamandri was covered with luxuriant crops raised by a thriving peasantry, whose growing wealth had given a marked impulse to the local trade, and enriched the land-revenue by many thousands a year. In the Kistna delta also, which forms the districts of Gantúr and Masúlipatám, Colonel Cotton applied the same means of enriching a tract of country hitherto wasted by alternate floods and drought. To all these undertakings Lord Dalhousie gave his heartiest support. His very last budget provided a sum of £150,000 in furtherance of the schemes devised by the zealous colonel of Madras Engineers.†

The promotion of public works all over India was one of the objects that lay nearest the Governor-General's heart. Seeing how much was needed in this direction for the special good of the people entrusted to his care, he had the courage to enforce his views by measures involving a larger outlay than the Indian revenues could alone defray. Those revenues, he wrote, were more than enough to meet all ordinary charges; but they neither could, nor was it reasonable to act as if they could, suffice to "provide for the innumerable and gigantic works" needful for the "due improvement" of so great an empire. For many years past the imperial outlay on all kinds of public works, from roads and canals to barracks and courthouses, had hardly exceeded a hundred thousand a year. The care and control of these works had hitherto been entrusted to a Military Board, which had also to manage a thousand matters connected with the army commissariat, the transport service, the magazines, the camp furniture, the hospitals, the studs, the ordnance, excise, and bazárs. These duties, so incongruous and so unworkable by a single board of three old

* Thornton's "Public Works." † Thornton; Arnold.

officers, Lord Dalhousie transferred by degrees into other and more capable hands. Coming at last to the question of public works, he placed these under the care of a separate Department, ruled by a Secretary for each Presidency, with the aid of a Chief Engineer for every large province. The regular staff of military engineers he supplemented with a number of special recruits, English and native, some brought direct from England, others trained in the new colleges at Rurki, Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay. A list of the works designed for each province was yearly laid before the Supreme Council. The first fruits of this large forecasting policy were gathered in 1854, when the budget estimates provided for an outlay of two millions and a half on the new Department of Public Works. In the following year the estimated outlay rose to three millions, or five times the amount expended in 1849.*

When the Military Board had been relieved of nearly all its duties, Lord Dalhousie proceeded to abolish it altogether. About a year earlier, in 1853, the same fate had befallen another Board, against which lay no imputation of work mismanaged or left undone. Lord Dalhousie's scheme of government for the Panjáb had proved in many ways a marked success. Under the mild sway of Sir Henry Lawrence great reforms had been accomplished, of which any nation might well be proud. But the time had come —a time no doubt foreseen by the Governor-General—when the great experiment of 1849 could no longer work on the old conditions. Between the two chief members of the Lahór Board differences of opinion on several points of State policy had caused misunderstandings, which grew at last to an inconvenient head. Sir Henry Lawrence's impaired health, his frequent trips into the country, and his invincible distaste for business details, had thrown upon his brother's shoulders a large share of his own proper work. "All details"— wrote John Lawrence to his colleague, Montgomery —"were thrown upon me; everybody was referred to me. Whoever did not understand what was to be done was referred to me for explanation. Establishments, pensions, *jaigirs*, all were thrown upon my shoulders."

John Lawrence was not the man to flinch from hard office work, still less to grumble at doing the work of a brother whom he loved. But it troubled him more and more to find how vain were all his efforts to carry out his brother's aims even at the cost of his own strong convictions. In 1852 the gulf between them grew daily wider, and the support which John received from Lord Dalhousie

* Arnold; Marshman; Chesney's "Indian Polity."

added fuel to the flame of Sir Henry's discontent. While the elder brother would have sacrificed everything to the interests of a proud and privileged aristocracy, John Lawrence cared but little for the claims of rank, birth, or former usage, in comparison with the demands of even-handed justice, good government, and a wise economy. Finding that these "differences of opinion were becoming more frequent and more acrid," and that public business was hindered by the very desire of the two brothers to "avoid cause for engaging in them," Dalhousie resolved to enforce the views he had already recorded in favour of a change in the government of the Panjáb. Before the end of 1852 both brothers had separately offered to resign their posts. The Governor-General seized his opportunity, and in February, 1853, John Lawrence saw himself gazetted Chief Commissioner for the Panjáb. His late colleague, Mr. Robert Montgomery, reappeared as Judicial Commissioner, while Mr. George Edmonstone took over the department of revenue and finance. Amidst the loud-spoken regrets of his old friends and helpmates, native as well as English, Sir Henry Lawrence started from Lahór to undertake the less trying duties of Agent to the Governor-General for the States of Rájputána, in the room of Colonel Low, who had just been preferred to the Residency at Haidarabád.*

In spite of the halo surrounding Sir Henry's name, it soon became clear that his late subjects had lost nothing by the change of rulers. On the foundations he had helped to lay, John Lawrence proceeded in the next four years to build up the fabric which, unshaken by the hurricane of the Sepoy Mutiny, still attests the moulding skill and all-subduing energy of its first architects. Around him worked a band of trusty subalterns, who, emulous of their Chief's example, never spared themselves in the public service, and vied with each other in executing the details of the policy mapped out by the master-spirit at Lahór. Those four years, in the words of Sir Herbert Edwardes, who succeeded Mackeson at Pesháwar, "were years of herculean labour, not only to the

* Merivale's "Sir H. Lawrence." Sir Henry's letters of this period show how deeply he was mortified by Dalhousie's readiness to remove him at his own request from the post which Dalhousie had long deemed fittest for a trained civilian. The feeling was natural; but Sir Henry himself had owned that he and his brother could no longer work together; his own health had *long* been unequal to the due discharge of all his duties, and John's views of public policy were much more in harmony with those of their common Chief, who, looking at the question from the standpoint of public interest, could hardly have acted otherwise than he did. He gave Sir Henry in Rájputána the same salary as he had drawn at Lahór.

Chief Commissioner, but to every man under him, high or low. Alone in responsibility, alone in power, John Lawrence bent the full force of his character and energies to the elaboration of a complete machine." If much had already been done to repress crime, to lighten the taxes, to simplify and humanize the judicial system, to open out fresh avenues for trade and labour, by a liberal outlay on roads and canals, a wide field of usefulness remained yet to till, on which the best efforts of the Panjáb Government had to expend themselves for some years to come.

All raids across the border were promptly repelled and sternly punished, and after punishment followed conciliation, applied so skilfully that the same offenders seldom repeated the offence. Many a wild robber clan took to trade or agriculture, filled our ranks with some of their bravest soldiers, or otherwise helped to guard the peace of a wide frontier. Within the border men like Nicholson in Bannú and Abbott in Hazára kept a warlike and unruly people in order mainly by sheer force of will, an unbending uprightness of purpose, untiring energy, and a shrewd insight into native character. From his watchpost at Pesháwar Colonel Edwardes kept an eye on all that happened beyond the border, whether among the hill-tribes of the Sulaimán or in the country ruled by Dost Mohammad. In Lahór itself Lawrence could always reckon upon the loyal services of his old friend and colleague, Mr. Montgomery, of his new finance minister, Mr. Edmondstone, and of the wise and popular Donald Macleod.

Under such auspices the Panjáb became in truth a model province. Crimes of violence grew rarer and more rare. The native officials in each district proved useful and trustworthy helpmates to their English chiefs. Trade and agriculture flourished more and more, to the benefit of the revenue and the great contentment of the people at large. Nature herself seemed to aid our countrymen's efforts with a timely succession of plenteous harvests. An improved system of State-aided schools and colleges was set on foot. Hospitals, dispensaries, and other public buildings arose in every district. The drainage and conservancy of large towns were taken in hand. New roads were cut in all directions, forests and grass-preserves were brought under State control, and surveys were pushed forward for lines of railway which now link Lahór with Delhi, Calcutta, and Karáchi.* A steady improvement in jail-discipline followed the appointment of an Inspector of Prisons. Looking back to the achievements of this period, Sir Herbert

* Malleson; Trotter; Arnold.

Edwardes might well doubt if India had "ever seen a province with a civil government so strong, so wise, so moderate, so pure, so good to live under as that of the Panjáb."

In his efforts to repress crime the Chief Commissioner had to reckon with the obstructive force of old social usages. One of these lions in his path was the practice of child-murder, which had prevailed for ages past among certain classes of the people; among the Bidi descendants of Nának, among the old Rajput clans, the poorer Khattri families, even among the Musalman gentry of the hills. Religion, caste-pride, fashion, poverty, the excessive costliness of Hindu weddings, all accounted in different degrees for the prevalence of a custom which doomed yearly to a violent death numbers of new-born girl-children, not only in the Panjáb, but in several other parts of India. A Bidi girl, who could never marry beneath her rank, was deemed better dead in the first hours of her being than growing up for a life of unwed dishonour. The new-born daughter of an old but decaying Rajput house was throttled out of hand, because her parents dreaded the crushing costs of a Rajput marriage. A Saduzai Pathán would slay his child rather than wed her to a lowborn stranger, or part with too large a share of his own inheritance. Among the humbler Khattri families, poverty alone too often accounted for the strange dearth of girl-children.

While he was yet Commissioner of Jalandhar, John Lawrence had declared war against the cruel custom which Mr. Raikes had afterwards gone far to banish from among the Rajputs of Mainpúri. Ever since the conquest of the Panjáb the moral influence of its new masters had saved many a Bidi babe from premature death. But the number thus saved was still as nothing compared with the multitude secretly put out of the way. In his efforts to uproot so crying an evil, the Chief Commissioner was not content with issuing edicts threatening condign punishment for all who thus outraged the laws of nature. His plan of action, as approved by Lord Dalhousie, resembled that which had been applied with much success to the Rajput child-slayers of Mainpúri. In the latter part of October, 1853, a great gathering of the native gentry met John Lawrence and a few of his ablest helpmates on the plain outside Amritsar. After discussing with the English Sahibs the best way of dealing with a custom so hateful to English ideas, the native chiefs and delegates all swore to observe the rules that might be framed on the bases already accepted by themselves. Erelong rules were issued which curtailed the marriage expenses

on a scale according with the means of every class and family. The meeting at Amritsar was followed up by like gatherings elsewhere. At one of these, held near the borders of Kashmir, the son of Mahárája Guláb Singh undertook, in the presence of an English Commissioner, to enforce among his father's subjects a reform like that already adopted throughout the Panjáb. As earnest of his own sympathy with the new movement, Guláb Singh took off for ever the tax heretofore levied on all weddings in Kashmir. The example thus set in high places spread swiftly downwards, until child-murder fell out of fashion with Panjábi housefathers, who no longer held it a point of honour to spend a large fortune on sweetmeats, fireworks, bards, and fakirs on the day of their children's marriage.*

The same year, 1853, marks the birth of cheap postage, the beginning of India's railway system, and the swift growth of electric telegraph lines. The question of a cheap uniform postage, on the principles first applied to England through the inventive energy of Rowland Hill, had been raised indeed by Lord Hardinge; but it was left for Lord Dalhousie to win the sanction of the India House to a definite scheme framed by a commission of his own appointing. He passed through his Council an Act which placed the Indian Post-offices under one Director-General, and reduced the postage on all letters carried from one end of India to the other to a uniform rate of half an anna, or three-farthings, on letters weighing not more than the eighth of an ounce. On letters weighing up to a quarter of an ounce the charge was fixed at one anna. The latter rate was charged on all newspapers, and postage-stamps took the place of cash payments. Thenceforth, as Lord Dalhousie might justly boast, a letter could travel from Pesháwar to Cape Comorin, or from Dibrúgarh to Karáchi, "for no more than three-farthings," whereas under the old system the same letter would have cost one shilling for the same distance. Under the old prohibitive rates very few natives of the poorer classes ever thought of using the regular post; their letters, when they wrote any, being carried far more cheaply by private runners in defiance of the law. Even the wealthier trading classes entrusted much of their correspondence to the same illegal carriers. A complete reform of the postal service went hand in hand with the cheapening of the postage. In the first two years of cheap postage the number of letters sent through the Post-office had increased by two-thirds, while the loss of revenue was unexpectedly small. Nor was the boon thus be-

* Arnold; Trotter.

stowed on India limited to her inland mails. To Lord Dalhousie's own exertions was mainly due that reduction of the postage between England and India, through which, as he said, "the Scotch recruit on our furthest frontier at Peshâwar could write to his mother at John o'Groat's House, and send his letter free for sixpence," the rate formerly charged between Peshâwar and Lahór.*

Meanwhile, the success of Dr. William O'Shaughnessy's pioneer "lightning-post," as the natives called it, between Calcutta and Kijri, was bearing fruit in the construction of telegraph-lines from Calcutta to Agra, Peshâwar, Bombay, and Madras. With an ardour heightened by his trust in O'Shaughnessy's resourceful genius, and by a noble impatience of the slow roundabout methods of transacting public business at home—"Everything," he complained, "all the world over, moves faster now-a-days than it used to do, except the transaction of Indian business"—the Governor-General, in 1852, despatched the doctor to England to plead their common cause in person before the Court of Directors and the Board of Control. In Sir James Hogg, then Chairman of the India House, the doctor found a warm friend and a powerful advocate of his master's views. In a week, the needful sanction had been secured for Dalhousie's scheme; and his active emissary began forthwith to enlist workmen and to collect materials for an enterprise of great moment and surpassing difficulty. A few months later, O'Shaughnessy was speeding back to India. In November, 1853, the first posts of a telegraph-line from Calcutta to Agra were set up. On the 24th of the following March, a message from Agra was flashed along the whole distance of 800 miles to Government House. By the end of January, 1855, Agra had been linked by the electric wire to Atak on the Indus, to Bombay, and Madras. In other words, 3,000 miles of telegraph-line had been laid successfully within fifteen months. A thousand more were laid during 1855. The wires were carried partly on bamboo poles, partly on pillars of stone or iron, over broad swamps, through [illegible]thless jungles, up many a wild mountain-side, across seventy large rivers, at an average cost of little more than Rs. 500 per mile. The difficulties which O'Shaughnessy had to encounter from climate, ground, white ants, wild beasts, and savage men; from the want of trained workmen, and the failure of old scientific appliances, were overcome with a success so marvellous and wide-reaching as to justify Lord Dalhousie's boast that "the

* Arnold; Trotter. In 1853 less than 20 million letters were sent by post. In 1854 it rose to 2[illegible], and in 1860 to 48 millions.

establishment of the electric telegraph in India may challenge comparison with any public enterprise which has been carried into execution in recent times among the nations of Europe, or in America itself."*

The opening of a railway from Bombay to Tánna, in the spring of 1853, marks a new stage in India's material growth. Over this, the first section of the Great Indian Peninsula line, 400 people were, on the 16th of April, carried twenty-four miles out and back again, at the rate of twenty miles an hour. After years of preliminary talk, surveys, correspondence, this much of a line which now links Bombay with the Narbada valley and Jabalpur, had been completed in about a twelvemonth; and the natives very soon learned to enjoy the new mode of travelling to the number of a thousand a day. Meanwhile, in Bengal and even in Madras, the works upon the lines already sanctioned went briskly forward. In August, 1854, trains were running regularly from Howrah to Húghli; and by the end of that year the East Indian Railway had been opened as far as Rániganj, 120 miles from Calcutta. On the Madras side, some fifty miles of railway were ready for opening at the end of 1855.

Such was the earliest outcome of the great experiment which no man helped so largely as Lord Dalhousie to set on foot. Through his exertions, loyally seconded at home by Sir James Hogg, a large, statesmanlike, well-digested scheme of trunk railways, built and worked by private companies for fixed periods, under a State guarantee, emerged slowly out of dreamland into the world of historic facts. Inch by inch he had to win his way against the inertness, the fears, or the prejudices of his nominal masters in Leadenhall Street. The Governor-General of India had not forgotten the lessons learned by the President of the Board of Trade. That India was in urgent need of railways for purposes alike of self-defence and internal development, he had from the first clearly seen and steadily asserted. The successes and the failures of railway companies at home had strengthened his old belief in the wisdom of combining private enterprise with some form of State control. But a country like India needed more than this for the full development of its productive energies and the free diffusion of its ill-distributed wealth. "Great tracts," he wrote, "are teeming with produce they cannot dispose of. Others are scantily bearing what they would carry in abundance, if only it could be conveyed whither it is needed. . . . . .

* Dalhousie's Farewell Minute; Arnold; Marshman.

Ships from every part of the world crowd our ports in search of produce which we have, or could obtain in the interior, but which, at present, we cannot profitably fetch to them."* If the Indian Government felt itself unequal to the task of establishing railways throughout the length and breadth of India, it might still do much to stimulate the influx of private capital and private enterprise into a country where both were sorely needed. For this end, Lord Dalhousie proposed to help the promoters of Indian railways by a free grant of the land they needed, and by guaranteeing a certain rate of interest on all their outlay, under certain conditions, for a definite term of years.

In one of the ablest minutes that ever came even from a pen so masterly and a brain so wide-working, Lord Dalhousie, in 1853, unfolded to the Court of Directors a detailed scheme for making 4,000 miles of railway, by means of public companies guarded by a State guarantee, and "directly, but not vexatiously, controlled by the Government of the country, acting for the interests of the public on the principle for which" he had so long contended. It is needless here to enlarge upon the clearness of his language, the convincing force of his arguments, the soundness of his provisions, and his thorough mastery of minute details. The gist and upshot of this memorable minute was an earnest appeal to the Court of Directors to lose no time in assaying an enterprise worthy of the great political and commercial interests involved in its achievement on a scale proportioned to the vastness of the regions subject to their sway.

To an appeal so powerful from such a quarter the Court of Directors no longer closed their ears. Their readiness to listen may have been sharpened by the taunts thrown out against them in the parliamentary debates of 1853, on the renewal of the Company's Charter.† But there was that in Dalhousie's masterful nature which few of those who came within its influence could long withstand; nor among those few were the magnates of the India House fairly to be reckoned.‡ Their answer, at any rate, yielded virtually all for which the Governor-General had asked; and the latter went his way rejoicing in the prospect of a time not far distant, when the journey from Calcutta to Delhi and Lahór would be reckoned by hours instead of days, when all India would be crossed and girdled by iron roads, and "a corps might leave England after the heat of the summer was over, and be quartered before Christmas on the banks of the Satlaj, without

* Dalhousie's Railway Despatch of 1853. † Marshman. ‡ Thornton.

any exposure on its way, and with four months before it of the finest climate under the sun."* Under a guarantee of ten millions one great company, the East Indian, was erelong engaged in carrying on its line of railway from Bardwán towards Delhi. The works on other trunk lines that would ultimately link Bombay with Madras and both with Upper India, went steadily forward. English engineers pushed their surveys in all directions; gangs of native workmen, under English overseers, plied their daily tasks in dark jungles, along steep hill-sides, amidst rugged wastes and broad plains, now bright with roses or poppies, now green with rice, wheat, maize, or other crops. New railway schemes forwarded from Calcutta received the sanction, complete or partial, of the India House. On the eve of his return home, in 1856, Lord Dalhousie might truly say that the Court of Directors had "every reason to be satisfied with the progress made in the construction of Indian railways since 1849, and with the prospect of future return."†

In this connection a word of recognition is due to those pioneers of railway enterprise to whom Lord Dalhousie owed some part of his success. The first scheme of a railway from Calcutta to the North-West Provinces was laid before the India House in 1844 by Macdonald Stephenson, whose services were afterwards rewarded by a knighthood. For many months past he had been engaged in exploring the ground and collecting the needful data for his scheme. About the same time another engineer, Mr. Chapman, was undergoing the same kind of labour in behalf of railways on the Bombay side. It was not, however, till 1849 that the India House gave its sanction to a small part only of the plans propounded by these two men. A still more prominent worker in the same field was Mr. William P. Andrew, a Postmaster in Upper India,‡ who struggled for years in vain to win acceptance of his scheme for connecting Lahór with its natural port at Karáchi by means of a railway along the Indus valley.

Of the capital invested in Indian railways only a small fraction came out of native pockets. But the new mode of travelling cheaply, at the rate of twenty or thirty miles an hour, in carriages drawn by the Fire Horse of the West, proved an attraction too great even for caste-pride to set at naught. The people at large

* Dalhousie's Railway Despatch.

† Dalhousie's Farewell Minute.

‡ As Chairman of the Sind, Panjáb, and Delhi Railway, Mr. Andrew was knighted in the beginning of 1882.

were not slow in exchanging the bullock-cart or the pony-car for the third class carriage of a railway train. Many a Brahman took his seat with philosophic coolness beside travellers of the lowest caste, or of no caste at all. Even the Dharma Sabha of Calcutta, the great council and mouthpiece of orthodox Hindus, decided with one voice that pilgrims might travel freely by the rail. In the last year of Dalhousie's rule nearly 1,400,000 passengers, mostly third class, travelled over some part of the 200 miles of line then open; and the number of these kept steadily rising year by year. Whatever faults were afterwards to show themselves in the working of the guarantee system, faults seldom chargeable to Lord Dalhousie's own account, his predictions touching the growth of passenger traffic were amply justified, even before his return home.*

Among the great roads begun, or continued, under Lord Dalhousie's auspices, was the road from Kalka, at the foot of the Simla Hills, to the far-off vale of Chini, where grapes grow in plenty at a height of 8,700 feet above the sea. This noble highway, planned by Colonel Napier, and carried on mainly by Captain Briggs, climbs and winds its way along the wooded steeps of the Himalayas at an easy gradient of three feet in the hundred. For the fifty miles between Kalka and Simla the road is broad enough for wheeled traffic. Beyond Simla on its way to the borders of Tibet it has an average breadth of six feet, wide enough for all the traffic hitherto possible between Tibet and India.† At the close of the Burmese War in 1853, Lord Dalhousie set his engineers to build a road from Dakha to Pegu, by way of Arakan. It was a task of no small difficulty, for the jungle was dense, the mountains were lofty, water and labour were very scarce, and the climate for seven months of the year was unfit for working parties. But in the course of two years a body of Burmese labourers, trained by the zealous Lieutenant Forlong, carried the road over the formidable Toungee Pass into the newly-conquered province of Pegu. The great trunk road from Calcutta to the North-West was fast approaching completion when Lord Dalhousie resigned his post.

Another work to which the great Marquis turned his attention was suggested by the growing difficulties and dangers of a voyage

* Arnold; Marshman.

† It was to Chini, with its cloudless sunshine and pure air cooled by the neighbouring Snowy Range, that Lord Dalhousie was wont to retire from Simla during the rainy season.

up the Húghli. It was becoming no easy matter for ships of great draught to thread their way up to Calcutta, through the dangerous shoals and sandbanks which beset their course. The noble river, which a century before had borne our largest war-vessels easily up to Chandarnagar, was gradually silting up with the acres of mud and sand which its waters yearly washed down to the sea. Dalhousie sought to avert the growing danger to a trade whose value had doubled in six years, by forming a new port on the Matla creek, at a place about twenty-five miles south-east of his own capital, from which place a broad deep channel leads down through the network of swamp, stream and forest that forms the Sundarbans into the Bay of Bengal. He bought the land required for the new harbour, set to work on the needful improvements, and projected the railway, which was afterwards to connect Calcutta with the new outlet for its seaborne trade.* The bulk of that trade, however, still flows along its former channels, and the port on the Matla bears the name of Lord Canning, who did little, if anything, to carry out his predecessor's plans. Another enterprise begun by Lord Dalhousie, but doomed to wait many years for its accomplishment, was the bridging of the broad Húghli, in order to connect Calcutta with the railway terminus at Howrah, on the right bank.

In those days of peaceful progress under a strong, just, and enlightened ruler, the duty of developing the resources of our Indian empire became a household phrase with our countrymen in both hemispheres. No statesman of Dalhousie's calibre, trained in the school of Peel, could help reflecting, encouraging and drawing new strength from the popular movement of his day. To every scheme for developing agriculture, industry, or trade, the Governor-General gave a ready hearing, followed often by his active support. The tea gardens which were soon to cover the hill-sides of Kángra and Kamáon owed their origin to his zeal in furthering Mr. Fortune's efforts to teach Indian planters and workmen the Chinese methods of growing and manufacturing tea. He strove, not always in vain, to extend and improve the production of silk, flax, jute, and other staples; to rear good breeds of horses in the Panjáb and the Dakhan; to improve the quality of Indian wool by means of imported Merino rams; to acclimatize sheep in the moist air of Pegu, and to rescue from destruction the noble forests of Pegu, Tenasserim, Oudh, and the Himalayas.

* The railway was not opened till 1863, and little use has yet been made of the new route by way of Port Canning.

His agents travelled about the country, from the Salt Range at Kalabagh to the hills of Birbhúm, Simla, Assam, and the Narbada Valley, in quest of workable iron and coal. Great fields of borax were found in the desolate uplands beyond Kulu and Spiti. Lord Dalhousie bore his share in the founding of an Agricultural Society in the Panjáb, and supplied the needful funds for establishing agricultural shows in Madras.*

The placing of a regular line of steamers on the Indus and the Irawádi, the improvements begun or ordered in the chief Indian harbours, from Karáchi to Rangoon, the rapid progress made in survey work by land and sea, the erection of lighthouses on many points of the seaboard, may all be traced more or less directly to the prompting influence of the same master-mind. During his rule the officers of the Great Trigonometrical Survey, led by Colonel Andrew Waugh, the worthy successor of Colonel Everest, carried their network of triangles over Sind, the Panjáb, Kashmir, as well as southward across the Kankan; while Colonel Thuillier pushed on the revenue and topographical surveys from Kashmir and Sind-Ságar down to Madras and the Nilgiris. Officers of the Indian navy surveyed the seas that washed the coasts of India and the adjacent countries, from the Persian Gulf to the Bay of Bengal. The toils and hardships encountered by many a survey party left their marks even on the strongest frames. But history, which fills pages with the events of a single campaign, has only a line to spare for the quiet heroism of those who toiled and suffered as a matter of mere duty in the field of scientific research.†

This chapter may fitly close with a brief reference to Lord Dalhousie's care for the wellbeing of the British soldier. He supplied the soldier with better rations, encouraged the use of malt liquor in preference to spirits, built roomy barracks at a proper height from the ground, with separate quarters for the married men, hung punkahs in every barrack, promoted swimming-baths, workshops, and soldiers' gardens in every station, furnished the regimental schools with books and stationery, and started a normal school for training schoolmasters at the Lawrence Asylum. Annuities for meritorious or distinguished service were bestowed on sergeants in the Company's army. Alive to the failure of transportation as a deterrent penalty, he

* Arnold; Dalhousie's Farewell Minute.

† In Mr. Clements Markham's "Memoir of the Indian Surveys," the reader will find ample confirmation of the foregoing remarks.

decreed the building of a special prison in India for all soldiers condemned to that fate. Alive to the evils of a seniority system, he proclaimed that in future no officer, "whatever his standing," should be selected to command a brigade or a division "unless he was confessedly capable and efficient."*

* Dalhousie's Farewell Minute.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SECOND BURMESE WAR.

In 1852 the Marquis of Dalhousie's peaceful labours were interrupted by the clash of arms on the eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal. In accordance with the treaties which crowned the close of the Burmese War in 1826, a British Resident had been sent to Ava to guard the interests of British trade in the regions watered by the Irawádi. A series of petty insults, culminating in an attempt to starve or drown the British officers then posted on an island liable to heavy floods, at length constrained the Indian Government in 1840 to withdraw its agents from the country then ruled by King Tharawádi, the successful usurper of his brother's throne. Thenceforth the interests of British trade were left to take care of themselves under the wing of a treaty which the new monarch of the Golden Foot had openly set at naught. From time to time complaints of wrongs inflicted by Burman officials on British traders at Rangoon were forwarded to the Indian Government through Colonel Bogle, the Commissioner of Tenasserim. At last, in 1851, these wrongs had grown to a pitch so unbearable that Dalhousie's Government could no longer keep silence. Two skippers had been kept in prison and heavily fined for alleged misdeeds of which they had just been formally acquitted. In September of that year the European merchants of Rangoon addressed a memorial to Lord Dalhousie, setting forth the outrages to which they were daily exposed in defiance of the Treaty of Yandabú. Neither life nor property, they declared, was safe under a system of endless roberies, false charges, and unlawful exactions, sometimes enforced by cruel tortures. Things, in short, were come to such a crisis, that, in default of due protection, the sufferers would have to leave the country and thereby sacrifice their worldly goods.*

In answer to these renewed complaints the Governor-General

* Parliamentary Papers; Arnold; Trotter.

called upon the Burmese Government to pay ten thousand rupees as compensation for British losses, to remove forthwith the guilty Governor of Rangoon, and to admit an English Resident either at Rangoon or at Ava. The better to enforce these demands, Commodore Lambert with his squadron was sent to cruise off Rangoon harbour, free to act as he might deem best if at the end of five weeks no answer reached him from the Burmese Court. So warlike a mode of conducting a peaceful mission might serve, at any rate, to extort from Burmese fears the reparation which Burmese arrogance and self-conceit would never have yielded to demands less clearly accented.

The days of grace were drawing to an end when, on the first day of 1852, the Commodore received from Ava a royal letter, promising full compliance with Dalhousie's demands. The Governor of Rangoon was recalled to Ava, and the Viceroy of Pegu, who took his place, was empowered to make the needful inquiries and to settle the amount of compensation due. On the morning of the 6th January, in accordance with arrangements made the day before, Captain Latter, interpreter to the Mission, sent to inform the new Governor that a deputation would wait upon him at noon. At the hour appointed Captain Latter and the officers of the mission rode up to the outer gate of the Governor's palace. They forced their way through a jeering crowd into the palace yard; but inside the palace they were not allowed to go. The Governor, they were told, was asleep, and none dared rouse him, although his slumbers did not prevent him from holding private intercourse by signals with his own retainers. Tired of waiting in the sun, of sending bootless messages upstairs, of affording food for laughter to the churls around them, the British officers presently rode away.

After so futile an issue no peaceful way of redress seemed open. On the afternoon of that day the British merchants assembled on board the Commodore's flagship, the *Fox*, were told of the insult thus wantonly offered to the British flag. All foreigners at Rangoon were straightway warned to take shelter on board the shipping within two hours. A crowd of anxious fugitives, English, American, Portuguese, Armenian, Musalman, was speedily thronging to the riverside, with such of their goods as they could manage in default of Burman porters to bring away. Next day the whole of the foreign shipping was safely anchored a few miles lower down the Rangoon river, and a large new-built frigate belonging to the King of Burma was impounded, by Lam-

bert's orders, as a pledge for the property left in Rangoon and a possible means of bringing the Governor into a more compliant frame of mind. The friendly Governor of Dalla, opposite Rangoon, came on board the *Fox* to help our countrymen in a last attempt at winning from the Rangoon Governor an apology for his rudeness of the day before. But evening brought with it only a hostile letter from that worthy, demanding the surrender of the King's ship, and threatening to fire upon our men if they tried to carry her off. In reply, the Commodore vowed that a single shot fired from the batteries on his way down the river would ensure their speedy destruction. At the same time he enforced his meaning by proclaiming a blockade of the Burmese ports.

On the 9th of January the last of the merchant-ships passed down the broad river convoyed by the men-of-war. As the *Hermes* steamer, with the King's ship in tow, came abreast of the stockades, a fire of guns and musketry opened upon the whole squadron. At a signal from the Commodore's ship, his captains took up the challenge. In little more than two hours the guns on either side of the river were silenced, the stockades ruined, many of the long war-galleys, each carrying a hundred men, swamped or put to flight, while several hundred Burmans lay dead or wounded in the abandoned works.*

Still the Marquis of Dalhousie was loath to enter on the war thus seemingly thrust upon him. Hurrying down from the North-West, he reached Calcutta on the 29th of January. On his way down he had signed a despatch to the Rangoon Governor, in which he annexed to his former demands an assurance that peace might still be purchased by an apology for the outrage of the 6th of January. As soon as these concessions were made, an envoy should be sent from Calcutta to arrange all further differences. Instead of an apology, the Governor replied by asking for the prompt despatch of an envoy, and by accusing of drunkenness and false statements the officers whom he had refused to receive.† These charges, at once so incredible and so untrue,

* Arnold; Laurie's "Second Burmese War." One brave chief, conspicuous by his golden umbrella, brought his war canoe opposite the Company's steamer *Phlegethon*. A thirty-two pounder was trained against the boat, but the *Phlegethon's* captain shouted to his men not to fire on so brave a foe. Happily his order was heard and obeyed.

† "They had been drinking," he wrote, "and it happened that I was asleep just at that time; whereupon, telling the Yaywoon and the other officers present to awake me, they returned and made a false representation to the Commodore.—" Burmese Blue-book.

were rightly treated by Lord Dalhousie as "an aggravation of the insult which the Governor was bound to repair."

His forbearance, however, had not yet reached its limits. In the midst of warlike preparations he left no means untried to keep the peace. The old demands were pressed once more by the Indian Government with a moderation as praiseworthy as it was misunderstood. They got nothing from Rangoon and Ava but evasive or insolent replies. Commodore Lambert was treated always with studied disrespect or cool indifference. Even then the door of repentance was not finally closed. In a minute of the 12th of February, Lord Dalhousie pointed out the impolicy of superseding Lambert's mission by the despatch of a special envoy to the Court of Ava. Such a measure would be regarded by the Burmese only as a mark of British weakness and a humble acknowledgement of the charges brought against British officers. The Indian Government could never hope to maintain peace and submission among its own subjects and allies if for one moment it gave "countenance to a doubt of the absolute superiority of its arms, and of its continued resolution to maintain it." At the same time he addressed to the King of Burmah a letter containing the very last offers that British dignity could stoop to make. These offers were moderate enough. Besides the former demands for compensation to Messrs. Lewis and Sheppard, for the admission of a Resident at Rangoon, and for a written apology from the new Governor, Lord Dalhousie contented himself with requiring payment of ten lakhs of rupees, or a hundred thousand pounds, in return for the outlay incurred by his Government in the process of enforcing its just claims. Failing the immediate payment of this fine, he would take upon himself to hold Rangoon and Martabán in pledge for the future settlement of his account. If these terms were not accepted by the 1st of April, war would be declared.*

Meanwhile the Governor-General wisely prepared for a struggle which many of his countrymen in India, judging him by their own fears or wishes, gave him credit for doing his best, or worst, to provoke. In face of the facts recorded in these pages there is no warrant for such a belief, nor was it likely that a ruler so absorbed in great schemes of peaceful enterprise would go out of his way to encounter the risks and expenses of a needless, and anyhow a troublesome, war. And certain it is that none of those who shared his counsels or his talk had any doubt whatever of his

* Burmese Blue-book; Trotter; Marshman.

extreme repugnance to the duel which Burmese obstinacy was forcing upon him.* But to stand forearmed against such a contingency was a duty which he, at any rate, had no mind to shirk. His Commander-in-Chief, Sir W. Gomm, was far away in Sind; but Lord Dalhousie, becoming his own War Minister, proved splendidly equal to the need. His skill in organizing a well-planned campaign would have done no discredit to a Carnot or a Wellington. It has been well said that "never since the time, fifty years before, when Lord Wellesley brought five armies into the field with matchless speed, and in four months crushed the power of Sindia and of the Rajah of Nágpur, had such a display of superb energy been witnessed in India."† From the middle of February to the end of March the work of preparation went on, delayed only by circumstances which gave new scope to Lord Dalhousie's self-reliant zeal. The 38th Bengal Sepoys, moved by dread of the "dark water" and by fear of losing caste, refused to go by sea from Calcutta to Rangoon. Dalhousie ordered them off to Dákha, and at once invited a Sikh regiment to fill their place, a call which those hardy warriors gladly obeyed. In answer to a request for the services of a Madras contingent, the Governor of Madras, Sir Henry Pottinger, declined, for various reasons of wounded pride and official routine, to embark a single soldier without special orders from the head of the Indian Government. These orders Lord Dalhousie at once issued on his own responsibility, and a few days after the time appointed the Madras troops were ready to embark in the war-steamers and other vessels sent round for that purpose by the Government of Bombay.

Dalhousie's mastery of details asserted itself in the precautions taken against mishaps like those which our troops encountered in the war of 1824. He ordered Colonel Bogle to drain Tenasserim of live stock, provisions, and other things useful for an army in the field. Wooden huts to shelter the troops during the heavy monsoon rains were got ready at Maulmain, and scores of carpenters were enrolled for the purpose of setting them up at the right moment. Arrangements were made for conveying bread to the British soldiers and sailors from bakehouses erected along the Tenasserim coast. The invading army, in short, was to carry its barracks and home-comforts behind it, while steamers were appointed to convey the sick and wounded to a hospital prepared for them at Amherst, a sanatorium thirty miles below Maulmain.‡ In short, the Governor-General was resolved that, if war must come,

* Marshman. † Ibid. ‡ Arnold; Marshman.

no effort should be spared on his part to bring it to a speedy and successful issue.

The command of the invading army was entrusted to Major General Godwin, a brave old officer who had fought in the first Burmese War, and whose native energy time had done little to impair. Admiral Austen was to take command of the fleet. By the 3rd of April it became clear that war was inevitable. On that day a Burmese battery fired upon the *Proserpine* steamer as she awaited an answer to a flag of truce. The steamer's guns soon destroyed the battery; and General Godwin, as he lay off the mouth of the Rangoon river, saw himself free to act upon Lord Dalhousie's sealed instructions. On the 6th of April a part of his force, some fourteen hundred strong, under Colonel Reignolds, was borne in five war-steamers from Maulmain across the woódgirt Salwín, to attack the well-manned defences of Martabán. By seven in the morning the troops were all landed under cover of a smart fire from the *Proserpine* and the *Rattler*. An hour later the pagodas crowning the wooded heights beyond the town were held by Reignolds's victorious infantry. Our whole loss amounted only to seven British soldiers, three Madras Sepoys, and one sailor wounded. Leaving a native regiment to garrison Martabán, General Godwin reshipped the rest of his troops, and on the 8th of April the whole armament was drawn up at the appointed meeting-place, ready for action against Rangoon.*

It was an armament the sight whereof might well have daunted a more powerful foe. The land-force, indeed, was weaker than that which Sir Archibald Campbell had led in triumph to Yandabú; for it amounted only to 5,800 men with a battery of sixteen guns. But the fleet with which Admiral Austen was to help his comrades on shore surpassed in numbers and equipment any which had yet been seen in East-Indian waters. Of the nineteen men-of-war, frigates, steamers, and gunboats, six belonged to the Royal, and six to the Indian Navy, besides seven small steamers of the Bengal Marine. They carried among them a total of 159 guns, served by 2,270 sailors and marines. A way for the fleet had already been opened on the 5th by Commodore Lambert, who, with the help of a wing of the 18th Royal Irish, destroyed a few stockades below Rangoon which might else have hindered the advance of the main force. On the 10th the whole array of war-ships and transports began crowding up the Rangoon river, itself a broad mouth of the mighty Irawádi, which, rising in the Patkoi

* Laurie; Arnold; Trotter.

Hills, flows through many mouths into the Bay of Bengal. Next morning they steamed or sailed onwards nearly abreast of the stockade which guarded Dalla and the old town of Rangoon.

As the leading vessels of the Indian squadron took up their places a brisk fire was opened upon them from both sides of the river. It was promptly returned with murderous salvos of shot and shell. Erelong the *Fox* was hurling her well-delivered broadsides against either shore. A lucky shot from Campbell's steamer, the *Sesostris*, blew up the magazine of the chief stockade at King's Wharf. Before eleven the enemy had almost ceased to fire. Soon after noon a party of seamen, marines, and Royal Irish, landed on the Dalla side, stormed three stockades in quick succession, while the guns of the *Rattler* and the *Tenasserim* were busied in silencing three more. About the same time the *Serpent* and the *Phlegethon* were steaming up to Kemmendine in order to cut off the Burmese war boats and prevent fire-rafts from coming down below. Towards evening another magazine was blown up and two more stockades destroyed by the shells of the Bombay squadron. Thenceforth not a gun was fired that night from either shore. The blaze of the captured stockades lighted up the darkness and revealed the damage already done to a brave but overmatched foe.*

This happened on Easter Sunday, the 11th of April. At four next morning, by the light of the burning stockades, began the process of disembarking the troops destined to attack and carry the great fortified Pagoda of Rangoon. Soon after seven General Godwin led the advance in a northerly direction. He had hardly gone a mile inland when the enemy's skirmishers opened fire from a wood in his front, and roundshot began dropping near him from the rising ground to the right of the wood. "This," wrote the General, "was a new mode of fighting with the Burmese." It was clear that they had somehow learned to throw out skirmishers and to leave the shelter of their stockades. And it soon became as clear that they knew how to take advantage of the ground and to make good use of their heavy guns. In reply to their challenge a few of our heavier guns opened fire at 800 yards from the Burmese entrenchment known as the White House stockade of the former war. For an hour or more the fight raged. It was nearly eleven before the Burman gunners gave way. Meanwhile the heat was telling more and more cruelly on

* Laurie; Low; Arnold. The stockades were built of teak-piles, backed by many feet of solid earth. Along a scarped bank on the outside ran a row of bamboo stakes sharpened to a point.

the British soldiers, whose uniform offered a tempting mark alike to hostile skirmishers and a blazing sun. But the bugles sounding the advance gave new heart to the weakest and most suffering. A storming party of the 51st Foot and the Madras Sappers sprang forward under a galling musketry-fire. Major Fraser of the Bengal Engineers was the first to plant his ladder and to reach the top of the stockade, unhurt by the bullets which rained around him. Others speedily followed his example, and in a few minutes the enemy were streaming in headlong flight out of the captured stronghold.

It was not yet noon, but his men were so exhausted that Godwin made up his mind to halt for that day. The sun had proved almost as deadly as the Burmese marksmen and gunners. Two officers and several men it slew outright, while many more were utterly disabled by its fierce beams. During the rest of that day, and once even in the night, our weary soldiers were teased with a harmless fire of musketry from the neighbouring woods. Meanwhile the fleet had not been idle. After landing the troops on the morning of the 12th, Commodore Lynch of the Company's service, followed by the *Sesostris*, *Moozuffer*, and *Zenobia*, took his own ship, the *Feroze*, abreast of the upper stockades, which were presently carried and burnt by parties of seamen and marines. For some hours the squadron kept on shelling the great Shwé Dagún Pagoda, which rose terrace above terrace to a height of 300 feet from the top of the hill overlooking Rangoon. Towards evening the *Feroze* and the *Moozuffer* steamed up the river to help the *Phlegethon* and the *Serpent* in attacking the Kemmendine stockade. Next morning a party from the men-of-war landed and burned the works which the enemy had meanwhile abandoned. During that night, as on the night before, the defences of the Dagún Pagoda were battered by a storm of shells and red-hot shot, the damaging effects of which became visible to the watchers in Godwin's camp.*

During the 13th, General Godwin stood fast by the White House stockade, awaiting the arrival of fresh guns and stores from the fleet. At daybreak on the 14th, his troops were all ready for a forward move. Having learned that the enemy expected him to attack the southern face of the great Pagoda, he resolved to baulk them by marching against its eastern or weakest side. After making its way through thick jungle for about a mile, and driving the enemy's skirmishers before it, the British

* Laurie; Low; Trotter.

van at length emerged in sight of the tall tapering dome of the great Buddhist shrine. Under a heavy fire of wall-pieces and cannon, returned by two of Montgomery's field-pieces, the troops marched on past the stockaded town, and halted behind some rising ground that lay between them and the point of attack. The rest of Montgomery's guns played upon a wood filled with skirmishers on the British right.

It was nearly ten before the heavy howitzers of the naval brigade took their place in Godwin's line. For more than an hour the thunder of hostile guns disturbed the air. Our soldiers, crowded in their narrow halting-place, began to fall fast under the Burmese fire, when Captain Latter, seeing the gap which our heavy guns had made in the defences of the Pagoda, besought the General to let him lead the storming party at once to the attack. Under his guidance, a wing of the 80th Foot, two companies of Royal Irish, and two of the 40th Bengal Sepoys, the whole commanded by Colonel Coote, stepped out in excellent order across the 800 yards that still lay between them and success. As they neared the hill whereon stood the great temple-fortress sacred to Gautama, the stormers were harried by a hot fire of musketry and jingals* from the Burmese crowded along the works which climbed, tier above tier, up the hill-side. Three terraces, each armed with cannon and strengthened by ramparts of mud and brick, seemed to defy the boldest assailants. But up the terraces ran broad flights of steps between which and the stormers lay, at one point, nothing but a broken gate. Not far behind them the main body was already marching up in support. With one swift rush and a ringing cheer, Coote's stormers were up the steps and forcing their eager way from terrace to terrace before the amazed defenders could offer them any serious hindrance. In a minute after the first rush, the great Pagoda was safe in British hands, while the "Immortals" who formed the pick of the Burmese army were streaming in hot flight through the southern and western gates, only to encounter a merciless hail of shot from the British men-of-war.

With the fall of its chief stronghold, all Rangoon, with its miles of stockades and heaps of warlike stores, passed into our hands. Our whole loss by land from the 11th to the 14th April amounted only to 17 slain and 130 wounded, the brunt of which fell upon the Royal Irish and the 80th Foot. Coote himself was badly

* These jingals, or wall-pieces, fired all kinds of missiles; bits of chain, flints, bags of broken metal, bottles of nails, and boxes of hammered bullets—(Arnold).

wounded, and by his side fell Lieutenant Doran stricken to death. On board the fleet during the same period not more than twenty-nine were wounded and one killed. But the official returns were silent as to the number of lives lost or imperilled by cholera on the river, by the fierce sun beating on the leathern shakos and thick woollen coats of the troops, or by the accidents which doomed them to pass two whole days running in the open air without tents or bedding, on ground as damp by night as it was parched by day.*

Of the Burmese loss, on the other hand, no sure reckoning was ever made. Some 200 dead were found on the field, but many more were carried away by their retreating countrymen. Many a Burman gunner had been blown to pieces by the shells from the fleet. The captured guns, of all sizes and patterns, in brass and iron, amounted to 92, besides 82 jingals, many hundreds of old flint muskets, and large stores of powder, shot and shell. In spite of their losses, the Burmese, with an army of 20,000 and the wet season before them, had no mind as yet to give up the struggle. Sheltered in their native woods, and free to move along their numerous rivers, they might still hope to brave the attacks, or tire out the patience of a foe weak in mere numbers, and unseasoned to the dangers of a tropical climate. An offer to treat indeed was made by the fugitive Governor of Rangoon, but his message took the form of a command to the British General, to "retreat while he could." At the same time, the Court of Ava was proclaiming a graduated scale of rewards for the head of every invader, white or black. Martabán itself was furiously attacked by a large body of Burmese on the night following the capture of Rangoon. Happily the garrison stood betimes to their arms; but it took them four hours of hard fighting to drive off their bold assailants. On May 26, another attempt to surprise and capture the same post resulted in a failure yet more complete; the Madras Sepoys, aided by three cutters from the *Feroze*, chasing the enemy for miles with heavy slaughter.

A week earlier, on May 19, 800 of Godwin's troops, under Major Errington, disembarked at Bassein, 150 miles west of Rangoon, from the steamers which Commodore Lambert had safely piloted up 60 miles of a river hardly known to our seamen, although it happened to be a main outlet of the Irawádi itself. Five thousand Burmans held the defences of Bassein, which consisted of a long stockade, armed with thirty guns, and flanked on

* Laurie; Trotter.

its left by a strong mud fort, also powerfully armed. A great golden pagoda formed the heart of the defences and the main point of attack. In fifty minutes after the advance, Errington's soldiers had stormed the whole line of works and driven the enemy before them with heavy loss. That of the victors amounted only to two killed and twenty-nine wounded. Meanwhile, Captain Campbell, with a body of his sailors, attacked and carried a six-gun stockade on the right bank. By that evening, fifty-four guns and thirty-two jingals had fallen into our hands, along with a fortified town which threatened Arakan and commanded the unruly province of Pegu.*

With the capture of Bassein, the whole of the seaboard from Sandoway to Maulmain passed out of Burmese hands. One-half at least of Pegu was virtually delivered from the yoke of the Golden Foot. The Peguers for their part accepted the change of masters with an eagerness sharpened by memories of past misrule, of bitter wrongs endured at the hands of a domineering though kindred race. They were ready not only to trade with the conquerors of Rangoon and Bassein, but to help them in driving the last of King Thárawádi's soldiers out of a province which a hundred years before had held all Burmah under its sway.†

On June 3, a small party of infantry, sappers, seamen, and marines, embarked from Rangoon on board the *Phlegethon*, and half a dozen ship's boats, under Captain Tarleton, to aid their new allies in capturing the town of Pegu, which lay about seventy-five miles north-eastward of Rangoon. At every village on their way up stream, our men were greeted with loud cheers; and at one place a body of armed Peguers, fresh from defeating a Burman detachment, were found waiting to act in concert with their British friends. Next day, Cotton's infantry, landing on the left bank of the shallow stream up which they had been rowed, marched inland under a blazing sun, over broad rice-fields dotted with woods and dwellings that clustered around a tall pagoda held by a large body of Burmese. As he halted his men for rest and refreshment, the enemy advanced to the attack. But his own 300 made little of the odds against them. The assailants fled like hares, and Cotton soon found himself master of the pagoda without losing a

* Trotter; Low; Arnold.

† The relations of Pegu and Ava seem to have been much like those of Poland and Russia down to the latter part of the eighteenth century. Each country in turn held rule over the other, until about 1757 Alompra conquered all Pegu and made Ava the head of the Burman Empire.

man. Earlier in the day, Captain Tarleton had lost one seaman slain and three wounded in repelling a sudden attack upon his boats. But the captors of Pegu could not be spared to garrison the post so easily won. After emptying the granaries, destroying the defences, arming the Peguers, and carrying off a few of the captured guns, Major Cotton retraced his steps to Rangoon.*

The rest of June passed quietly enough save for the seamen of the *Proserpine*, which, with the help of two boats' crews from the *Fox*, threaded its way up the Irawádi within thirty miles of Próm, seizing eighty large boatloads of the enemy's grain, and destroying a strong Burmese stockade on its way down. In Rangoon itself the sickness among our troops was gradually declining; the heat was moderate as compared with Calcutta; and the men were in good heart, thankful for the shelter of the huts which Dalhousie's forecast had provided for them against the monsoon rains. A great change for the better had already come over the old trading capital of Burma. A new town had sprung up as if by magic amidst the ruins left by our shot and shell. The country people flocked in by thousands to bask in the free sunshine of British rule. On the broad river floated a crowd of foreign shipping, whose masters had no longer to fear the exaction of ruinous fines on pain of languishing in a Burmese prison. Peace, plenty, free trade, guarded by just and equal laws, marked the first days of that new rule, whose extension over Pegu was desired as earnestly by the Peguers themselves as by the bulk of English politicians.†

It was now the height of the rainy season, when steam power might be turned to good account in scouring the many waterways that led into the heart of Burma. On the 6th of July the dashing Captain Tarleton started in command of five steamers on a scouting voyage up the Irawádi. In three days he pushed his way through channels dry in the hot season up to Próm, which he found empty of armed men, but fairly furnished with guns. His sailors, aided by the townspeople, carried off four and sank nineteen of the guns, besides destroying a quantity of warlike stores. The same afternoon Tarleton himself in the *Medusa* steamed ten miles above Próm. Four days more of easy steaming would have brought him to Ava. But he had already fulfilled his orders, and he knew that a large Burman army was strongly posted in his rear on the heights commanding the river at Akauk-taung. So on the 10th he started homewards, in time to

* Laurie. † Laurie; Arnold; Trotter.

catch the tail of Bandúla's force on its way across the Irawádi, and to pounce upon the general's state-barge, ten war-boats, a few guns, and heaps of arms and ammunition. The abandoned heights of Akauk-taung were afterwards occupied by the *Pluto's* seamen, who demolished the works and destroyed or brought away twenty-eight guns of various calibre.

During the next few weeks the war flagged. While British steamers roamed up and down between Rangoon and Próm, Bandúla contented himself with a few raids on villages lying for the moment open to attack. Bodies of freebooters roved about the country, doing more harm to their own people than to ours. Never backward in doing thoroughly the work he had once taken in hand, Lord Dalhousie himself came over to Rangoon, to see with his own eyes how things went on, and to take counsel with his commanders for the prosecution of the war. He found the troops healthy, well fed, and well housed, but impatient of the long halt which General Godwin had decreed, with the Governor-General's full consent. Returning shortly to Calcutta, he hurried on the mustering of the fresh troops which Bengal and Madras were to furnish for the final conquest of Pegu.

To him, indeed, this seemed the only possible solution of a most perplexing problem. From the first he had declared that "conquest in Burma would be a calamity second only to the calamity of war." To that opinion he still adhered in the letter which asked the sanction of the India House to his measures for completing the conquest of Pegu. From the issue thus enforced by the need of choosing the least of the evils that lay before him he "could discover no escape." In no other way than this could he hope to "secure the establishment of our superiority now, and its maintenance in peace hereafter." And it was much in favour of such a course that the people of Pegu wished for nothing better than the transfer of their country from Burmese to British rule, while the advantages, political and commercial, of such a transfer would speedily outweigh the evils incident to every extension of the Company's frontiers. In no other way, moreover, could the friendly people of Pegu be ensured against the renewal of those deeds of savage vengeance which the Burman Government had wrought upon them for the goodwill shown to Campbell's army in the first Burmese War.

The reply from the Secret Committee left Dalhousie nothing to desire. Extension of territory was not in itself a desirable thing, and they agreed with their Governor-General that the possession

even of such a province as Pegu must be looked upon "rather in the light of a choice of evils than a positive and unmixed good." But they agreed still more decidedly with all Dalhousie's arguments in favour of a course which tended not more to our own good than to the good of the people whose country was to be annexed. "It may be doubted, indeed"—they wrote—"whether the relations even now established between you and that people have not already imposed upon you the obligation of protecting them." And so they empowered the Governor-General to consider the annexation of Pegu as "the just and necessary result of the war he had been driven to wage against the Burman empire." *

The beginning of September found Rangoon astir with preparations for the final advance to Próm. Day after day steamers and sailing ships from Madras and Calcutta landed more men, guns, and stores at Rangoon. By the 27th the last steamer of Admiral Austen's fleet bore off the last detachment of the force which Godwin himself accompanied up the river. On the afternoon of the 9th of October, the flotilla came close up to the town of Próm, and the landing of the troops at once began. Next morning the whole column, about 2,300 strong, marched into the town straight up to the great pagoda without firing a shot; for the Burmese garrison had discreetly fallen back upon the main army, which lay strongly stockaded in the jungle some ten miles east of Próm. In that city, begirt with miles of swamp and rank jungle, the troops were destined to remain, suffering not a little from sickness and night attacks, while General Godwin returned to Rangoon to bring on the remainder of his army, and to plan fresh movements in the direction of Pegu, which had once more been occupied by a Burman garrison.†

During the rest of October not much was done on either side. The death of Admiral Austen transferred the naval command to the younger and more active hands of Commodore Lambert. A Burman attack on Henzáda, near the junction of the Bassein and Rangoon rivers, was bravely repulsed by Captain Becher and a company of Bengal Sepoys. Later in the month Bandúla himself, being ordered back in disgrace to Ava, preferred the safer alternative of surrendering himself into British hands. Early in November, whilst Godwin himself was returning with a fresh brigade of troops to Próm, a party of seamen under Captain Loch landed at Akauk-taung, and with a bold rush carried off six guns from the heights, which the enemy had once more begun to fortify.

* Burmese Blue-book. † Laurie.

On the 19th of the same month four small steamers and a few boats laden with troops started from Rangoon on a voyage up the Sitang river to Pegu. On the 21st the troops, numbering in all a thousand and fifty, under Brigadier McNeill, were landed in a thick fog without a shot from the enemy. The energetic Godwin accompanied them on their march through dense jungle up to the old bush-covered ramparts, whose defenders greeted them with a sharp fire of jingals and musketry. For two hours the column plodded through high grass along the broad moat that guarded the ruinous walls of Pegu, until they found a gap through which brave men might win their way. A storming party of Bengal and Madras Fusiliers plunged across the muddy moat, and in a few minutes the enemy, quailing before our levelled bayonets, were in full flight towards the chief pagoda. Aided by the fire from our flotilla, McNeill's soldiers held their way onwards, and erelong the stormers under Major Hill forced their way through hostile bullets into the pagoda itself. In a moment the enemy were flying from their last stronghold. By one o'clock Pegu had fallen for the last time into British hands, after many hours of exhausting toil through steaming jungle, at a cost of twenty-four only killed or hurt. The brigadier himself was struck down by the sun.*

Leaving some 450 men with two howitzers to hold the captured city under Major Hill, the rest of the force returned to Rangoon. They were hardly out of sight when the enemy began to annoy the small garrison with a series of attacks, which thinned its numbers and drove Major Hill to send off urgent messages for aid. Night after night, from the 5th to the 13th of December, thousands of Burmans swarmed up to the entrenchments with amazing boldness, in spite of the punishment they were sure to receive. A relieving force, despatched on the 10th from Rangoon, was beaten back with heavy loss. On the 14th a larger body, nearly two thousand strong, including three hundred of Armstrong's Sikhs, marched up under Godwin himself to the old ramparts, once more alive with armed men, whose courage failed them as our troops pressed forward. At length the pagoda came in sight, and all eyes strained to see if it were still held by a British garrison. Erelong the white faces of our countrymen and the sound of their welcoming cheer dispelled all uneasiness on that score. Placed between two fires, the enemy fled with all speed to their last defences, out of which they were finally driven by a dashing onset of Armstrong's Sikhs.

* Laurie; Trotter; Innes.

After rescuing Hill's little garrison, Godwin proceeded to clear the surrounding country of the foe. But the Burmese had no stomach for further fighting, and Godwin's caution baffled their attempts at an ambuscade. In a few days they had fled beyond reach of his Rámgarh Horse as far as Shwégyin, and Godwin, finding his own supplies run short, turned back on the 21st to Pegu. A few days later he led the bulk of his force down to Rangoon, leaving the Pegu garrison strengthened up to seven hundred men.*

He had already been made aware of Lord Dalhousie's purpose touching the future of the Pegu province. On the 20th of December the seamen on the river, on the 21st the troops in Rangoon, heard the reading of the proclamation which declared that province a part of the empire ruled by the East India Company. The Peguers were bidden thankfully to accept the yoke of a master at once strong, just, and merciful; the last of the Burman troops were to be driven out of the new dominion; then, if the Burmese refrained from further fighting, the Government of India would do the same. Captain Arthur Phayre, already famed for his success as a civil officer in Arakan, was appointed Commissioner of Pegu, while the district of Martabán was made over to Colonel Bogle, Commissioner of Tenasserim. Among the advantages ensured by a measure which satisfied alike the hopes of the Peguers and the views of all moderate statesmen in India and England, were the filling up of the British seaboard between Arakan and Maulmain, and the opening out to foreign trade of the great river whose upper waters alone remained in Burmese hands. The country thus wrested from barbarian rule measured two hundred miles in length, by nearly as many broad; a country blest with a fruitful, well-watered soil, rich alike in teak forests and rice-fields, and peopled by half a million hereditary foes to the kindred race with which they had so often striven for the mastery.†

For some months yet, however, the war lingered on. The King of Ava still refused to accept the verdict of accomplished facts. Here and there one of his officers, or some bold robber-chief, still defied our troops from his stockaded stronghold in the heart of the woods. During the first weeks of 1853 one British column under General Steel was employed in chasing the Burmese from Martabán northwards to Tonghu, over two hundred miles of pathless forest, varied by heavy swamps and broad rivers, through all

* Laurie; Trotter. † Burmese Blue-book.

which its advance was hindered by a long train of baggage-carts and heavy guns. On the western side of Pegu a handful of seamen and Peguers, led by Rennie and Fytche, made some daring and successful onslaughts on large bodies of Burmese strongly posted about the Bassein river. Far less fortunate was the issue of an expedition led by Captain Loch against Myahtún, a bold robber-chief, who, with several thousand followers, had taken his stand in the heart of the jungles between Dánabyú and Henzáda. A brave but reckless sailor, Loch pushed forward into the jungle from Dánabyú, only to find himself caught in a formidable ambush, out of which no way of escape was open save that by which he had come. His little force of sailors and Sepoys had to struggle back to the riverside under a constant fire from a foe emboldened by success. Two small guns, abandoned on the way, and a loss of eighty-eight officers and men, including their commander mortally wounded, was the price paid for the rash advance through unexplored jungle against an enemy of unknown strength.*

The brave Burman chief, however, was not destined to defy our arms much longer. On the 18th of February, 1853, Sir John Cheape, the erewhile engineer of Multán, set out with eight hundred men and a few guns and rocket-tubes from Prôm to drive the lion out of his forest lair. At Dánabyú, on the 6th of March, his force was strengthened by about five hundred men and two mortars sent from Rangoon. Cholera, short supplies, and the ignorance or the treachery of his guides delayed for some ten days his final advance. Meanwhile Rennie with his Blue-jackets, and Fytche with his Peguers, were hurrying up to share in the coming strife. At last, on the 17th of March, Cheape's soldiers began creeping cautiously forward through a pathless jungle, where poisonous airs, heavy night mists, and a hot sun conspired with all the devices of Burman cunning to try their mettle and to hinder their progress. Barriers of felled trees and breastworks manned by sharpshooters continually blocked the way; while cholera and dysentery wrought deadlier harm than Burman bullets. In two days, however, the force had crept inch by inch up to the innermost line of Myahtún's defences. A day's hard fighting still lay before it, but the evening of the 19th of March saw Myahtún flying from his captured stronghold at the head of two or three hundred men, the wrecks of an army which that morning had numbered four or five thousand. The task of hunting the Burman Wallace out of Pegu was made over to Captain Fytche and his

* Laurie; Low; Trotter.

irregulars. In the campaign thus happily ended the victors lost twenty-three killed and a hundred and eight wounded, besides more than a hundred dead of disease. Among the thirteen officers wounded was Ensign Garnet Wolseley of the 80th Foot, since known to fame as the conqueror of Ashanti and Tel-el-Kabir.

Meanwhile from Ava, where a new king reigned in the stead of his dethroned brother, Commissioners were on their way to treat with the conquerors of Pegu. On the 4th of April the envoys landed at Próm from their long galleys, bright with gilded sides and gold-tipped paddles, forty to each boat. Over each envoy's head were borne three umbrellas covered with gold. Stepping forth to the sound of British guns and passing through a street of British soldiers, the strange-looking visitors approached the three British Commissioners, Sir John Cheape, Commodore Lambert, and Captain Phayre, who ushered them into the meeting-hall amidst the thunders of a fresh salute. At a second conference, held on the 8th, the Burman envoys again pleaded for some concession to Burmese dignity. Humble in their demeanour, they still demurred to the yielding up of Miaday, and earnestly begged leave to retain Bassein or some other port in Pegu. Pending an answer from the Governor-General, the conference was adjourned and a truce declared for thirty days. On the 8th of May the envoys were invited to hear the reading of Lord Dalhousie's answer. He was ready to give up Miaday, but insisted on keeping the rest of Pegu. The envoys offered, in their master's name, to pay a large sum for the surrender of that province into Burmese hands. This proposal was at once rejected. Again the envoys pleaded their master's inability to give up any part of his kingdom. They undertook to pay any reasonable sum for a peace which would render them back Pegu. They would let us have a free port at Bassein or Martabán; but to sign away their right to a whole province was an act which no Burman sovereign, still less their new master, could allow. To such language the English Commissioners soon grew tired of listening. On the 10th of May they warned the Burman envoys to leave Próm in twenty-four hours.

By that time, however, the war was virtually over. No armed force of Burmese remained within the boundaries of Pegu. Myahtún himself had fled to Ava, and the new King of Burma withdrew his troops to a respectful distance from the province he still refused to yield up. An outbreak at Biling early in April had caused the retreat of its small Sepoy garrison and the despatch

of fresh troops from Calcutta to Maulmain. But the place was speedily recovered, and the chief who had suddenly turned against us had to make the quickest of his way beyond Tonghu. The King himself seemed anxious only for the removal of a blockade which made rice dear and dried fish a forbidden luxury throughout Burma. His prisoners had been kindly treated and unconditionally set free. Nothing indeed but the pride that dares not yield to circumstances kept his hand from signing the treaty which Lord Dalhousie, in compliance with orders from England, had drawn up.*

While the King was sending messages of peace to General Godwin, Lord Dalhousie issued the proclamation which announced the close of the second Burmese War. On the 30th of June, trusting in the King's promised forbearance from all hostilities and in other proofs of his virtual friendliness, he proclaimed the breaking up of the Army of Ava, the raising of the river blockade, the renewal of peace, and the desire of his Government for friendly intercourse with that of Burma. This step, which disappointed those who had longed for a march on Ava, and surprised the advocates of diplomatic etiquette, had long since been foreplanned by the Governor-General himself.

His reasons for halting at Próm and waiving the usual sanctions of a regular treaty had been carefully recorded in his masterly Minute of November, 1852. From the Secret Committee in England they had drawn forth a final if qualified assent to a scheme which had the threefold merit of saving millions of public money and some thousands of human lives, of sparing his Burman Majesty a great humiliation, and of setting the Indian Government free from the duties and the annoyances involved in a formal treaty with a barbarian King. As the Secret Committee had still harped on the advantages of such a treaty, Dalhousie loyally tried, as we have seen, to fulfil their orders, albeit himself assured that "a treaty with Burma is of no more value than the reed with which it is written," and that the formal surrender of Pegu, "the first and best of the conquests of Burma," was an act of open humiliation against which the national pride of the Burmese would struggle to the last. The attempt to treat failing, as he had foreseen, left him free to carry out the wiser policy whose success has become an historic fact.†

Thus ended, after fifteen months, a war which, for an outlay short of two millions sterling, threw into the Company's hands a

* Trotter; Laurie. † Burmese Blue-book.

good-sized province, destined erelong to pay its own expenses, and peopled by a race of peaceful husbandmen and traders, kindly affected from the first to their new lords. The forces engaged in the war were rewarded for their toils and valour with a medal, a present of six months' batta, and a promise of prize-money, which the English Government took ten years to fulfil. A sufficient force was left to garrison the new conquest. Godwin himself, on the 3rd of August, embarked for Calcutta to take command of a division in Upper India; but illness, brought on by his late exertions, carried the brave old man off at Simla on the 26th of October. If he had lately become a mark for the shots of hasty or ill-informed critics, Sir W. Gomm did the memory of his old friend and comrade no more than justice in the general order which announced his death.

CHAPTER X.

DALHOUSIE'S ANNEXATIONS.

BESIDES the two large provinces which Lord Dalhousie's successful wars brought within the ring-fence of the Company's domains, a large addition thereto was made by a process which exposed him to a vast amount of unmerited blame. On the 5th of April, 1848, died the Rajah of Satára, Apa Sahib, the heirless ruler of the kingdom founded nearly two hundred years before by the famous Sivaji in the wooded highlands of Western India. For many years after the real centre of Marátha power had been transferred to Púna, the capital of the Peshwas who overran Upper India and ruled Delhi in the name of the Moghal, the House of Sivaji retained its nominal headship of the Marátha League. But the final overthrow of the Púna dynasty by Lord Hastings in 1818 placed all Maháráshtra at the conqueror's mercy. At that time the heir of Sivaji was nothing but a pensioned captive in his ancestral domain. To the rescued Rajah, Partáb Singh, the Governor-General restored the kingdom of Satára, embracing an area of ten thousand square miles, with a revenue worth about £200,000 a year. Under the treaty of 1819 the Rajah agreed for himself, his heirs, and successors to hold his kingdom "in subordinate co-operation with the British Government," which pledged itself to defend his territory against attack from within or without, provided that in all things he acknowledged the due control of a British Resident.

After a time the restored Rajah waxed restive under the curb thus placed upon his kingly powers. Deeming himself little better than "the manager and farmer of a district," he entered upon a course of intrigues and insolences which provoked a quarrel with the Government of Bombay. In 1839 the Supreme Government, after full inquiry, deposed the offender and placed his brother Apa Sahib upon the throne. The new Rajah governed well and proved amenable to the Resident's mild control. Being childless

and a good Hindu, he adopted in his last hours an heir, who, according to Hindu custom, would succeed to the property and all the private rights of his adoptive father. But of his right to ascend the throne there was absolutely no question; for that depended wholly upon the pleasure of his liege-lord, the Government of India. Without the consent of the Paramount Power, no son by adoption could claim to inherit a public dignity; and in this instance that consent had not been given. The need for that consent was admitted even by Sir George Clerk, then Governor of Bombay, although he argued that the right of adopting an heir to a native dynasty was implicitly assured by the treaty of 1819. The two members of his council and Lord Falkland, his successor in the Government, agreed, on the other hand, that the treaty of 1819 embraced none but natural heirs, and that in no circumstances could the adoption of an heir be valid without the sanction of the Paramount Power.

On the 30th of April the Governor-General himself recorded his belief that, "where the right to territory by lapse is clear, the Government is bound to take that which is justly and legally its due, and to extend to that territory the benefits of our sovereignty, present and prospective." The right of adoption in default of natural heirs should be permitted only when some strong political reason might counsel a departure from the general rule. Opposed as he was to any avoidable extension of frontiers, he could not "conceive it possible for any one to dispute the policy of taking advantage of every just opportunity for consolidating the territories that already belong to us, by taking possession of States that may lapse in the midst of them; for thus getting rid of those petty intervening principalities which may be made a means of annoyance, but which can never be a source of strength." Such a policy would tend not only to enlarge the resources of the public Treasury, but to promote the best interests of the people thus brought under a uniform system of civilized rule. It was Lord Dalhousie's earnest belief that the people of Satára had everything to gain by a process which ensured them "a perpetuity of that just and mild government," which under native rulers they enjoyed only by fits and starts.*

This doctrine of the right of lapse was not now put forward for the first time. It had been formally asserted some years before by Lord Ellenborough and his council. A little later Lord Hardinge himself had informed the heir to the Holkars of Indór that his

* Kaye; Marshman; Parliamentary Papers.

sovereignty should descend to none but natural heirs of his house. Some years earlier, in 1839, Sir James Carnac, as Governor of Bombay, had warned the Court of Directors that, if the Rajah of Satára died childless, an event which seemed to him all but certain, his State would lapse to the British Government unless it thought fit to recognize an adopted son. The Court of Directors themselves had presently laid down the general rule that no heir by adoption should be acknowledged save "as a special mark of favour and approbation"; and this principle the Indian Government had since applied to two or three small chiefships in Western India.

Thus armed by precedent, and swayed for good or ill by the bent of his own nature, Lord Dalhousie laid before the India House the documents on which he founded "his strong and deliberate opinion" that the British Government was bound "not to put aside or to neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue," as might arise from the failure of natural heirs, without regard for any adoptions effected under Hindu law. With a few exceptions of men like Henry Tucker and John Shephard, the Court of Directors decided that Lord Dalhousie should have his own way. "By the general law and custom of India" —ran their despatch of January 1849—"a dependent principality like that of Satára cannot pass to an adopted heir without the consent of the Paramount Power; we are under no pledge, direct or constructive, to give such consent; and the general interests committed to our charge are best consulted by withholding it." Satára was annexed accordingly. A liberal pension and a large estate were settled on the family of the late Rajah and on his adopted son; his erewhile subjects yielded quietly, if not always cheerfully, to their fate; and very few of them took part against their new masters in the great struggle of 1857.*

The principle thus enforced against Satára Lord Dalhousie proposed to apply in 1852 to the little Rájput State of Karauli, lying south of Bhartpur. In 1817 the Rajah of Karauli had saved his State from absorption by transferring his allegiance from the dethroned Peshwa to the lords of Leadenhall Street. His descendant, Narsing Pál, on the day before his death in 1852, adopted a son whose claim to succeed him was supported by the Resident, Colonel Low. Among the members of the Supreme Council Sir Frederick Currie argued on the same side, drawing a distinction between Satára and Karauli which his colleagues,

* Kaye; Marshman

including Lord Dalhousie, could not allow. Karauli might be the older State of the two, but in both States British supremacy had been established on conditions substantially the same. In referring the question to the India House, Lord Dalhousie recorded his own opinion that the weight of argument rested with the advocates of the policy enjoined in 1849. But the friends of native dynasties found strong allies in the House of Commons, and the Court of Directors ruled that "a protected ally" like the State of Karauli must be exempted from the principle enforced against "a dependent principality" like Satára. In due time, therefore, a new Rajah was installed by Low's successor, Sir H. Lawrence; and the year of the Great Mutiny saw Madan Pál among the most loyal champions of British rule.*

In plain truth, the distinction thus drawn between the two cases was a distinction without a difference. Both States had passed by conquest out of the hands of the Peshwas into those of the East India Company. Both alike became dependent principalities, and in each the reinstated ruler held towards his new suzerain the relation of a protected ally. But in 1852 the Company had to reckon with the force of political and popular feeling in England, just then awakened from its sleep of years by the rumour of coming debates in Parliament on the question of renewing the Company's Charter. At such a moment the commands of prudence might well overcome their respect alike for consistency and the advice of their Governor-General. It was easy by a careful choice of words to win a character for humane forbearance towards the older dynasties of India, with the view of silencing one strong section of the Company's opponents at home. And so it happened that Karauli was saved from the fate of Satára.

In 1853 the Company's Charter was renewed, and before the close of that year Lord Dalhousie came in for a much larger and more important windfall than Karauli. On the 11th of December died without issue, lineal or adopted, the last of the Bhósla Rajahs of Nágpur. The kingdom which had thus lapsed to us covered an area of 76,000 square miles—nearly that of the North-Western Provinces—peopled by more than four million souls. Its rolling surface slopes gently down from the densely wooded crest and sides of the Mahádéo Mountains, to the fruitful plains watered by the Wainganga and the Godávari. This portion of the larger kingdom, which the treacherous revolt of Apa Sahib had for-

* Kaye; Malleson; Marshman. He was rewarded by the remission of his debt and the addition of two guns to his salute.

feited to our arms in 1817, Lord Hastings bestowed next year on a youthful scion of the same Bhósla stock. The boy of twelve turned out in his later years—in the words of Lord Dalhousie—"a seller of justice, a miser, a drunkard, and a debauchee." Neither himself nor his widow after him had gone through the ceremony of adopting an heir. Such being the case, it seemed to Lord Dalhousie that the time had come for converting Nágpur into a British-Indian province. In a long and carefully reasoned Minute he set forth the grounds for this new application of the doctrine of Lapse. There was "no question of an inchoate, or incomplete, or irregular adoption," for the Rajah had died, having "deliberately abstained from adopting an heir." Justice, custom, and precedent alike left the Government "wholly unfettered" to decide as it thought best. "Policy alone must determine the question whether the sovereignty of the State, which was conferred on a Gújar* in 1818 shall be conferred on somebody else as a gift a second time." He was well aware that the continuance of the Nágpur Ráj, as an act of grace and favour on the part of his Government, would be "highly acceptable to native sovereigns and nobles in India." Many persons of high authority would doubtless advocate such a policy on that special ground. He could understand and respect their feelings; but in view of the responsibility laid upon himself, he could not bring his judgement to admit that "a kind and generous sentiment should outweigh a just and prudent policy."

Three successive Residents at Nágpur had borne witness, two of them against their own leanings, to the contentment, if not the delight, with which the mass of the people, the peasantry, bankers, and tradesmen would hail the introduction of British rule. For the sake of the people, therefore, the Government ought not to bestow the lapsed sovereignty afresh on a native ruler. To him all other considerations seemed as naught in comparison with the interests of the people of Nágpur. "I conscientiously declare," he wrote, "that unless I believed that the prosperity and happiness of its inhabitants would be promoted by their being placed permanently under British rule, no other advantages which could arise out of the measure would move me to propose it." †

Words like these, so often uttered by the same man, may beget in some minds a suspicion that Lord Dalhousie was given to pro-

* The Gújars are a numerous tribe of low-caste Hindus, who combine husbandry with cattle-lifting and other forms of plunder.

† Dalhousie's Minute on Nágpur.

testing too much. And the advantages of such a policy in this instance were, by his own showing, far from small. The absorption of Nágpur would enclose the Nizam's dominions, curtailed by the recent cession of Berár, within a girdle of British territory. An unbroken line of communication would be secured between Calcutta and Bombay. The cotton fields of the Berai valley would be opened up to English enterprise, and their produce might ere long be borne by rail to the Western capital. Such a prospect might well have tempted a less scrupulous statesman to make light of the moral difficulties in his way. But in Lord Dalhousie's case we have no grounds for assuming that he paltered with his conscience for any public end. His daily life, spent in unwearied, self-sacrificing toil for the public good, his utterances, private and public, on the many questions that came before him, the evidence of those who knew him best, all go to attest his honesty of purpose, the depth of his belief in the blessings of a just and civilized rule, and the fervour of his zeal for promoting the happiness and well-being of the greatest number by all fair and strictly lawful means. Whatever he did or aimed at doing was done or intended for the best. His judgement may sometimes have been at fault; his intolerance of anarchy and misrule in the Native States may have blinded him somewhat to those redeeming traits and counterweighing benefits by which some of his followers set more than sufficient store; and his mode of dealing with native princes and nobles may have lacked something of the high-bred courtesy which marked his bearing towards all classes of his own countrymen. But he never swerved from what seemed to him the path of duty, nor did he shrink from following that path because policy or ambition might point the same way. And if a statesman is to be judged by his deeds alone, it is certain that even those deeds for which Lord Dalhousie has been most loudly blamed were inspired by motives not less praiseworthy than those of his chief opponents, and warranted by arguments to which time has added new strength.

Of the three members of the Supreme Council one only, Colonel John Low, dissented from the policy proposed by his chief. A brave old officer, trained in the school of Sir John Malcolm, kind-hearted and conversant with the ways of many Native Courts, from Lucknow to Haidarabád, he pleaded powerfully, but in vain, for the right of Nágpur to retain its own government under the treaty of 1818. Neither policy nor justice could, in his opinion, sanction a course which was sure to heighten the alarm and resent-

ment already stirred in native breasts by the annexation of Satára. The Native States, moreover, gave free scope for the energies of high-born or ambitious natives, who could never hope to rise under British rule. Whatever blessings that rule might bring to the people of India, they still clung to the rule of their own countrymen, however bad. Like the people of other countries, they preferred their own habits and customs to those of foreigners.*

Mr. Halliday, on the other hand, denied that any question of right was involved in the case of a country whose Rajah had left no sort of heir, and whose people were "avowedly hoping, praying, expecting" to be taken under our rule. He ridiculed the notion of raising to the vacant throne some "son of a daughter of a sister of the adoptive father of the late Rajah," or else some "son of a daughter of a sister of the adoptive grandfather of the late Rajah." Of the two youths thus labelled one was violent and dissipated, while the other had a delicate constitution. Before the end of February, 1854, Nágpur became a British province, and the Court of Directors presently gave their unqualified sanction to the step which Lord Dalhousie had taken in accordance with their letter of 1849.

Outside the dead Rajah's palace not a murmur of complaint was heard; but his aged grandmother, Bánka Bai, and the ladies of his Zanána, protested bitterly against a measure which forestalled their purpose of adopting an heir, and fought hard to retain as much as possible of the State property for their own use. They even accused their best friend, Mr. Mansel, the British Resident, of aiding the Lord Sahib in his designs upon Nágpur.† A good deal of cheap sympathy with these poor ladies was evoked by the manner in which Lord Dalhousie sought to distribute the late Rajah's wealth among the rightful claimants thereto. He had ordered that the royal ladies should receive their due share of the palace treasures, besides pensions suited to their rank, while the rest of the property should be sold, and its proceeds formed into a fund "for the benefit of the Bhósla family" at large. The sale of live stock at Sitabaldi, and of jewels and other valuables in Calcutta, gave the friends of the Ránis a convenient handle for sentimental abuse of a Government which outraged the privacy of the Zanána and stooped to play the part of auctioneer.‡ But

* Colonel Low's Minute of February, 1854.

† Mr. Mansel in fact got a severe "wigging" for his zeal in their behalf, and soon afterwards retired from the service in disgust.

‡ It appears that £40,000 in gold and silver was disinterred from under the couch of one of the Ránis.

if native pride was wounded by acts like these, it is hard to see how else a Governor-General bent on carrying out his own views of justice could have gone to work. It was not he who despoiled the Ránis, but the Ránis who succeeded in despoiling their own kinsmen, for much of the treasure buried in the palace was allowed after all to remain in their own keeping. Of the money realized by auction, amounting to two hundred thousand pounds, not a rupee was annexed by the Government. The whole was religiously set aside for the sole use of the Bhósla family.*

A passing reference has already been made to the cession of Berár. That fertile province, which Lord Hastings had wrested in 1819 from the Nágpur State, was presently handed over to our ally, the Nizam. In 1843 that sovereign had been informed that unless he made better arrangements in the future for the payment of his growing debts to the Company and for the expenses of the contingent force which former treaties bound him to keep up, the Indian Government would have to take over a part of his dominions in pledge for the value of their unsettled claims. But no warnings nor threats could teach wisdom to a headstrong ruler, who let things slide from bad to worse, who intrigued against the ablest of his own ministers, Suráj-ul-Mulk, and made no effort to put down the disorders which ran riot through the land. Rival Tálukdárs fought against each other, the peasantry were ground down by all manner of exactions, crime flourished without a check, and swarms of Arab and Rohilla mercenaries roamed the country, selling their services to the highest bidders, and plundering the people among whom they dwelt. The needs of a failing treasury were supplied by loans extracted at ruinous interest from the bankers of Haidarabád. Nothing, indeed, but the guns, swords, and bayonets of the small British contingent stood between the Nizámat and utter chaos.

At length, in 1849, Lord Dalhousie directed the Resident, General Fraser, to press the Nizam for a speedy settlement of his debts to the Paramount Power. If his Highness Násir-ud-daula desired a stable government, if he cared at all about paying the debts he was always promising to pay, "he should place trust in his ministers, and allow their projects to be carried to a lasting end." By the last day of the year 1850 the debt to the Indian Treasury must be paid up, or else the Governor-General would "take measures to forward the interests of his own Government." But the end of that year saw the reckless descendant of Chin

* Kaye; Arnold; Marshman.

Khilich Khán staggering under yet heavier burdens than before. His debts to the Indian Treasury on account of the Contingent had increased, and the bankers refused to grant him any more loans. Himself always short of money, with his Arab and Rohilla soldiery in chronic mutiny for their arrears of pay, with councillors unfit to help or powerless to control him, he kept on making promises of reform and retrenchment which never blossomed into deeds. In April, 1851, he was granted six months' further grace to pay off a debt of eight hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Before the end of July his ministers had contrived to scrape together somewhat less than half that sum. Four months were given them to find the remainder on pain of having to yield up certain outlying districts in pledge to their long-suffering creditor. November passed by, and not a quarter of the balance had been paid in. Amidst scenes of wild disorder the year ended, and amidst like scenes the next year glided on; the Nizam still promising to govern better and to pay up his arrears, while General Fraser still besieged him with good advice and grave warnings against the dangers of delay.*

In November, 1852, General Fraser was replaced by Colonel Low. By that time the debt to the Indian Treasury had risen again to half a million, and the officers and men of the Nizam's Contingent were fain to borrow of the bankers at the rate of twenty-four per cent. Again and again did the new Resident urge the Nizam to accept the only terms which he was empowered to offer. Násir-ud-daula professed to hold it his sacred duty neither to part with any of his provinces, nor to dismiss any portion of his troops. The notion of disbanding the Contingent, or even of reducing it by a single bayonet, he had steadily resisted from the first; but the Governor-General was equally resolved to stand no more excuses for the non-fulfilment of an obvious duty. If the Nizam insisted on retaining the Contingent at any cost, he must give some tangible security both for its punctual payment in the future and for the due discharge of debts already incurred on its account. After a series of stormy interviews with Colonel Low he agreed at length, with bitter reluctance, to sign the treaty, which handed over into British keeping three districts yielding revenue enough to defray the interest of the debt, and all charges for a contingent force of seven thousand horse and foot, with twenty-four guns, all officered by our own countrymen. By this treaty, signed in 1853, the districts of Berár, Raichór, and

* Trotter; Marshman.

Naldrúg, which formed no part of the original Nizámat, were ceded to the Company in perpetual trust for the Nizam, who retained his sovereign rights over them, with the benefits of any surplus that might from time to time accrue. The ceded districts were to be governed by the British Resident at the Nizam's Court, and a full account of receipts and disbursements was to be laid yearly before the Nizam himself. While that prince was thenceforth relieved from the duty of furnishing a large force in time of war, the Contingent itself became "an auxiliary force kept up by the British Government for the Nizam's use."*

For this happy solution of a long-vext problem Low himself was largely indebted to the good fortune which enabled Suráj-ul-Mulk, the reinstated Vázir, to hit the weak spot in his master's armour of defence. While Násir-ud-daula was yet vowing that nothing would induce him to sign the treaty, his faithful Minister was quietly gilding the palm of a favourite valet who at that time held his sovereign's ear. To this man's pleadings, aided, perhaps, by the menacing aspect of affairs, the Nizam at length gave way, and the desired districts were surrendered peacefully into our hands.† So readily did they thrive under the new rule, that, two years afterwards, Lord Dalhousie gave back to the Nizam a district yielding three lakhs of rupees, or £30,000 a year. Berár itself, the great cotton-field of India, lying along the foot of the Sátpúra Range, was destined to reap the full benefits of a rule which began by lightening the burdens of the peasantry, and tearing down all barriers to the free growth of trade.

The same officer who had helped to carry out Lord Dalhousie's policy towards the Nizam lent the sanction of his name and counsels to the absorption of Jhánsi, a little state in Bundalkhand, the overlordship of which had passed in 1817 from the Marátha Peshwa to the Indian Government. It was only in 1832 that the hereditary Chief of Jhánsi received the title of Mahárája. In 1835 Sir Charles Metcalfe, as Governor of Agra, refused to acknowledge an heir of his adoption, and placed on the Gadi a leper who chanced to be next of kin. Three years later the leper was succeeded by his brother, Gangádhar Ráo, who died childless in November, 1853, leaving behind him an empty treasury and an adopted son. His widow, a woman of high spirit, strong will, and no mean ability, claimed the sovereignty for this child of five, in defiance of the rule laid down by the Court of Directors in 1849. Looking to that rule, to the language of existing treaties, and to the Minute

* Aitchison's "Treaties"; Parliamentary Papers. † Marshman.

recorded by Sir C. Metcalfe, the Governor-General rejected the claim. The weight of authority was all on his side. Sir C. Metcalfe, with all his tenderness for native usage, had expressly maintained the right of the Paramount Power to "limit succession according to the limitation of the grant, which in general confines it to heirs male of the body, and consequently precludes adoption. In such cases, therefore, the power which granted, or the power standing in its place, would have a right to resume on failure of heirs male of the body." And now Colonel John Low, another warm friend to Native dynasties, recorded his opinion that the native rulers of Jhánsi being "only subjects of a sovereign," the Government of India "has a full right, if it chooses to exercise that right, to annex the lands of Jhánsi to the British dominions."* Dalhousie himself, moreover, held it good policy to resume a fief, however small and of little value, which lay in the midst of British territory, and the possession of which would tend to improve the general administration of our own districts in Bundalkhand. Jhánsi, therefore, was annexed, and the Ráni, Lakshmi Bai, lived to wreak, ere long, a terrible revenge for the flat rejection of her claim to act as Regent in the name of her adopted son.

Another question which had lately come up for settlement was the claim urged by Nána Dhúndu Panth to the princely pension bestowed in 1818 on his adoptive father, Báji Ráo, the dethroned Peshwa, whose long life came to a peaceful close in January, 1853. In vain did the claimant—the notorious Nána Sahib of a later day—appeal to the wording of the treaty which ensured payment of a pension of eight lakhs a year—then worth nearly £100,000—to the family of Báji Ráo. In vain did he plead that the pension had been granted in exchange for territory valued at thirty-four lakhs a year. It was clearly shown that Sir John Malcolm, who made the treaty, had granted the pension only for the Peshwa's own life, as a free gift to one who deserved no mercy at his conqueror's hands.† It was agreed that the Nána himself had a clear right to inherit the Peshwa's private property, including the large sums which the aged pensioner must have saved in the course of thirty-five years; and Mr. Thomason allowed him to retain for life the town and territory of Bithúr on the Ganges, where his adoptive

* Minute of Colonel Low; Kaye; Marshman. Both Mr. Halliday and Colonel Low, however, advised that Jhánsi should not be annexed.

† As such it was described by Mr. Prinsep, Lord Hastings' Secretary, in his "History of the Marátha and Pindári Wars"; and afterwards by Kaye in his "Life of Sir John Malcolm."

father had breathed his last. But neither Lord Dalhousie nor the Home Government would listen for a moment to the Nána's claim to inherit the dignities and the pension of a prince who, some years before his death, had vainly besought the British Government to continue the pension to his adopted heir. This fact alone shows how little Báji Ráo himself misunderstood the treaty of 1818.*

As a final answer to the Nána's appeal for so-called justice, the Court of Directors, in May 1853, informed him through Lord Dalhousie that "the pension of his adoptive father was not hereditary, that he had no claim whatever to it, and that his application was wholly inadmissible." By that time the Nána's Vakil or agent was hastening towards London to plead his master's cause. On his arrival, however, he found that cause irrecoverably lost; nor could all his eloquence or his powers of intrigue avail to undo an act of simple justice which many persons, judging hastily by the event, or misled by a passing fashion, afterwards construed into a flagrant wrong.

In the same year, 1853, died the last titular Nawáb of the Carnatic, the lineal heir of the dynasty founded a century before by Anwar-ud-din. For fifty years past the Nawábs of the Carnatic had enjoyed nothing but an empty title and the handsome pension which Lord Wellesley had deigned to bestow on Azim-ud-daula in 1801.† Since then two other Nawábs had been allowed to assume the title and to enjoy the pension. Azim Jah, uncle to the latter of these, now claimed to succeed his childless nephew. But Lord Harris, then Governor of Madras, counselled the extinction of a royal pageant which the Company had never pledged itself to maintain intact, and Lord Dalhousie entirely agreed with him. Mohammad Ghaus having died childless, there was no excuse for admitting the claim of Azim Jah. The Court of Directors decreed that the title and dignity of Nawáb, with all the advantages implied in the treaty of 1801, had come to an end. The same process was applied a year later to the old Marátha kingdom of Tanjór, whose titular Rajah had also died without a direct heir. Out of the large stipends which thus lapsed to the Government, due provision was made in each case for the surviving members of the family. Both Azim Jah and the Ráni of Tanjór struggled for a

* Kaye; Marshman.

† From the treaty of 1801 Lord Wellesley carefully excluded all reference to heirs and successors, thus showing that its provisions were applicable only to a single life.

time against the sentence of the Paramount Power. But the former, at any rate, had small reason to complain of an arrangement which relieved him of his enormous debts, and granted him precedence of all other native noblemen in the Madras Presidency. The Rání fought her case with much spirit, but with small success, for the judgement given in her favour by the Supreme Court of Madras was set aside by the Privy Council, on the plea that no law court could adjudge the question at issue between her and the Indian Government.*

There was another Phantom Royalty which Lord Dalhousie, intolerant of shadows cast by no substance, made a bold effort to efface. Mohammad Bahádur Shah, "a rheumy old man, chewing betel-nut all day,"† and sometimes spinning verses of small merit, still held within his palace at Delhi a mockery of that imperial sway which Akbar and Aurangzib had wielded over the greater part of India. Within that palace the pensioner of the Company was still the Great Moghal, in whose presence no Governor-General could appear on equal terms. Within that palace he still enjoyed the power of life and death over a few thousand followers and dependents. On the death of Prince Dára Bakht, the heir-apparent, in 1849, Lord Dalhousie seized the opportunity for getting rid erelong of a monstrous sham, for extinguishing a grave reproach as well as a lurking danger to our rule. For years past the Court of Directors had learned to regard the extinction of the Delhi dynasty as an event by no means undesirable. Lord Hardinge himself, in 1844, had requested the Resident at Delhi, in the event of the old king's death, to acknowledge no successor without his special leave. To Lord Dalhousie, proudest and most English statesman of his day, the great castle-palace by the Jamna, which commanded the imperial city and the chief magazine of Upper India, seemed not only a sink of barbaric corruption, but "the source of positive danger, and perhaps not unfrequently the focus of intrigues against our power."‡

He resolved to tear away the last veil of illusion from the face of a hard fact, to let all men know that the East India Company and not the House of Bábar were the real lords of Hindustan. His first intention, to make the King himself withdraw from Delhi to his country-house at the Kutab, some twelve miles off, he deemed it better to forego, in spite of the sanction granted him by Sir John Hobhouse, then President of the Board of Control. A sentimental outcry overbore the wiser counsels of those who feared

* Arnold; Marshman. † Arnold. ‡ Kaye.

with Hobhouse and Dalhousie that the palace of the Moghals might one day become the rallying-centre of Mohammadan revolt. A king of seventy years, however, could not live many years longer, and meanwhile his next heir, Prince Fakr-ud-din, might be induced to sign a treaty pledging him on his father's death to surrender the palace into our hands. To the conditions offered him the Prince made no visible demur. But the aged king outlived his son, who died in 1856 of cholera, or as many said of poison; and the dynasty which Dalhousie had doomed to a peaceful extinction, signed its own death-warrant in the murderous outbreak of the following year.*

A statesman who would lose no rightful opportunity of strengthening and consolidating the British power in India was little likely to replace a native ruler in the province which Sir Mark Cubbon had so long and ably administered. When the Rajah of Maisúr in 1856 besought leave to resume the government of his own kingdom, Lord Dalhousie at once rejected the prayer which in 1847 had been addressed in vain to Lord Hardinge.† It was a personal, not a dynastic treaty which Lord Wellesley had made with Maisúr, and the Governor-General saw no good reason for handing back to a worthless prince a people who had so long enjoyed the blessings of civilized rule. In the same spirit of lordly justice he had dealt in 1852 with Mir Ali Murád of Khairpúr, the successful plotter against the Sind Amirs, the semi-independent ruler of certain districts assigned to him by his English friends after the victory of Haidarabád. His treason to his fellow-princes had been crowned by an act of successful roguery, which some of his most trusted followers at length came forward to reveal. In 1851 Ali Murád was found guilty of forging the title-deeds to the lands of which he had been made ruler. Cutting out a leaf of the *Korán* on which the treaty had been written, he had put in another leaf so worded as to give him lordship over several districts instead of the villages which bore the same names. For this offence in the following January he was formally deposed from his sovereign rank, and stripped of all his lands save those inherited from his father, Mir Sohráb Khán. For this piece of exemplary justice done to a thorough scoundrel, Dalhousie was held to blame by those who took the sentimental or the merely legal view of his policy towards the native princes; as if the Paramount Power had no right thus to punish a prince of its own making for "a great public crime,"‡ that seemed not so very heinous in native eyes.

* Kaye. † See Chap. VII., Book II. ‡ Lord Dalhousie's Proclamation.

Ever since Lord Hardinge's visit to Lucknow in 1847 the affairs of Wájid Ali's kingdom had been steadily declining from bad to worse. In that green garden and teeming granary of India, every man did that which was right in his own eyes, from the king himself amidst his fiddlers, buffoons, and dancing-girls, down to the humblest follower of his court. The two years of grace allowed to the Royal debauchee passed by, and in 1849 the Resident, Colonel Sleeman, reported no change for the better, nor any hope of such change, whether in the King's own conduct or in the general state of things in Oudh. Like England in the days of Stephen or of John, the country was given over to every form of violence and utter lawlessness. The Tálukdárs from within their mud forts surrounded by belts of jungle defied the Chakladárs or revenue officers, who in their turn took bribes from the wealthy and preyed upon the poor and weak. Eunuchs, fiddlers, and singers filled all the best places in the State. The wretched peasantry were ground to the dust by rackrenting landlords, ruthless revenue-farmers, and a swarming soldiery, who lived by plunder for want of regular pay. Bands of Dakaits raided everywhere against the villages and harried the traders on every highway. Large tracts of fertile land were turned into jungle. The King's favourite fiddler was made Chief Justice, and his favourite singer acted as Vázir for a King who never troubled himself about public affairs, as long as he could indulge his own taste for rhyming, drawing, dancing, and could go about the busy streets of Lucknow beating a big drum that hung round his neck. There was no such thing, in short, as government, law, or justice throughout the land.* Justice was simply bought and sold; the right of the strong to murder, rob, torture, and enslave the weak was the only law which had any force outside those favoured spots where the families of the Company's Sepoys could secure some kind of protection from the British Resident at Lucknow.

Such was the state of things which Sleeman had to report in 1851 as the upshot of all he had seen or learned during his travels of the past two years. And such, if not even worse, was the state of things which Sleeman's successor, Colonel James Outram, found rankly flourishing in 1855. No wonder that both these officers, with all their reverence for the rights of native princes, and their known dislike or dread of the policy then favoured by most of their countrymen in India, agreed in urging the Governor-General to put forth the strong hand of interference with a swarm of evils

* Sleeman's "Diary"; Kaye; Marshman.

which the faith of treaties and the cruelty of further forbearance alike commanded him to clear away. For the sake of a suffering people they called upon him to enforce his treaty-rights against a dynasty which in fifty years had broken all its pledges again and again, and to assume the government of a country whose native rulers had long since proved their entire unfitness to govern it for themselves.*

Outram's written report found Lord Dalhousie recruiting his health at Utakamand, the Simla of Southern India, in the heart of the wooded Nilgiris or Blue Mountains. It was the closing year of a rule which had already lasted two years over the normal limit; and the great Viceroy's health was fast breaking under the prolonged strain of hard, incessant toil for the public good. Nerving himself for one more task, which had been perhaps too long neglected, he proceeded in a Minute of great length and remarkable fulness to unfold his own plans for the better government of Oudh. The main purpose of this famous State-paper was to show how steadily the Nawábs of Oudh had disregarded the Treaty of 1801, which bound them to govern well and justly for the general good and happiness of their people, and "always to advise with and to act in conformity to the counsels of the officers of the East India Company." For more than fifty years they had misruled their country in such a way that nothing but the presence of a small British contingent had kept the people from working out their own deliverance. The very forbearance of our own Government had done much to heighten and prolong their sufferings; and the time had now come when further tolerance of such misrule would only make our Government a sharer in the crime. Bound as we were, however, "to amend the lot of a people whom we have so long indirectly injured," justice and gratitude to a dynasty which, with all its faults, had been ever true to its allegiance, "nevertheless require that in so doing we should lower the dignity and authority of the sovereigns of Oudh no further than is absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of our righteous ends." Dalhousie, therefore, could not recommend so strong a measure, however politic, as the entire absorption of Oudh into British territory. Nor was he in favour of placing the government for a time only in the hands of British officers, seeing how that process had failed elsewhere. The plan of his own preferring was to let the King "retain his royal title and position," while the whole civil and military government of his kingdom should be

* Kaye; Irwin; Marshman.

transferred for ever into the hands of the Company. The revenues of the country should be applied first to the payment of all administrative charges; secondly, to the payment of liberal stipends for the King and his family; thirdly, "to the improvement and benefit of the province." Any surplus remaining after these deductions Dalhousie was for placing "at the disposal of the East India Company," with a view to "the general good of that Empire of which Oudh originally was, and still is, no more than a province." *

Of the four members of his Council before whom the Minute was duly laid, not one demurred in any way to his main proposal, the permanent transfer of all power in Oudh from its own sovereign to the India House Board. On this point even General Low was in hearty agreement with his Chief. Mr. Barnes Peacocke, the legal member, recorded an opinion to the same effect; while Messrs. Dorin and Grant differed from the rest only in demanding the entire annexation of Oudh. Mr. Barnes Peacocke differed from Lord Dalhousie only in desiring that all surplus revenue should be spent within the province, and that no military charges should be defrayed out of the Oudh exchequer.† The whole question was then referred to the Court of Directors, who took time to ponder their reply. At last, in November 1855, they sent out to India a despatch which Lord Dalhousie, arguing from his secret instructions, construed into a simple order to annex the country without more ado. Whatever it seemed to say—and there was something of studied reticence in its language—he knew which way its authors meant him to go, and he had already pledged himself to carry out their orders, even if they outstripped his own designs.‡

He opened the despatch at Calcutta on the 2nd of January, 1856. Before the end of the month Outram had received his final orders from the Governor-General. On the 4th of February he waited upon Wájid Ali with a letter from Lord Dalhousie, and the draft of a treaty which the King was invited to sign. The letter recounted the shortcomings of successive Nawábs, declared that the Treaty of 1801, so often violated, had now come to an end, and advised the King to accept the only terms which the long-suffering Company had now to offer. The British

* Dalhousie's Minute on Oudh.

† Under the Treaty of 1801 we undertook to defend Oudh out of the revenues of the ceded districts.

‡ Irwin's "Garden of India"; Kaye; Arnold.

Government would be "guilty in the sight of God and man, if it were any longer to aid in sustaining by its countenance and power an administration fraught with suffering to millions." The new treaty which the King was bidden to sign declared that "the sole and exclusive administration of the civil and military government of the territories of Oudh shall henceforth be vested for ever in the Honourable East India Company; together with full and exclusive right to the revenues thereof." For Wájid Ali himself and his heirs was reserved the title of King, with full sovereign rights over his palace at Lucknow and his park at Dilkushá, a yearly pension of twelve lakhs, with three more for his body-guard, and due provision for all the members of his family.*

In spite of an offer which would have saved the dynasty from utter extinction, Wájid Ali stubbornly refused to avert his fate. Not all Outram's courteous pleadings could win him to sign a treaty which he held to be a fit matter for equals only. The British Government, which was all-powerful, might do with him whatever it pleased. Against a Power which was able to make and to unmake, to promote and to degrade, he had no thought of maintaining a hopeless struggle. His rank, his honour, his kingdom, all was gone from him; but the treaty that was to make him a pensioner on British charity he would by no means sign. One thing only would he ask, permission to carry his sorrows with himself before the Queen of England. Thus speaking, amidst an outburst of womanish tears and sobs, he took his turban from off his head and placed it in Outram's hands, in token of utter helplessness and self-surrender. But beneath the show of grovelling self-abasement there seems to have lurked a feeling of deep resentment, which betrayed itself alike in his refusal to sign the treaty, and in his avowed intention to seek in Europe for that redress which was not to be found in India.†

On the 7th of February Outram received from the palace a brief note informing him that the King's purpose had undergone no change. Nothing, therefore, remained for him but to issue a proclamation drawn up by Lord Dalhousie, declaring Oudh thenceforth a component part of our Indian Empire. He himself took formal charge of the city and government as Chief Commissioner; the civil officers of the Oudh Commission were despatched to their several districts; British troops were marched into the province, and the annexation of Oudh soon became an accomplished fact. The King himself had commanded his people to offer no resistance to

* Irwin; Arnold. † Irwin; Kaye; Arnold; Trotter.

their new masters; and from no quarter did any resistance come. Not a shot was fired nor a blow struck in defence of a dynasty which had long since forfeited all right to reign over the fairest and worst governed province in Hindustan. The people everywhere submitted peacefully to the rule of the English Sáhibs. Wájid Ali, with his wives, children, and retainers, withdrew to his future home on the Húghli in the green suburb of Garden Reach. Over the whole face of things there stole a change as complete as any produced by the shifting slides of a magic lantern. It seemed in truth as if Pandemonium had suddenly transformed itself into Paradise.

Neither in India nor in England were many voices raised at the time against a measure which the great Proconsul had carried through in accordance less with his own ideas than with the virtual commands of Leadenhall Street and Cannon Row.* By refusing to sign the new treaty Wájid Ali had pronounced the doom of a dynasty which had reigned only by British sufferance ever since Sir John Shore had displaced the son of Asaf-ud-daula by a ruler of his own choice. For the sorrows of a discrowned debauchee none but his own family and a few faithful followers seemed to care. Few people questioned the right of the Paramount Power to enforce against a refractory vassal the treaties which he and his forefathers had steadily broken for so many years past. If Wájid Ali would neither sign the treaty nor accept the pension of £120,000 a year, that was no reason for regretting the act of justice, of prudence, of mere humanity, which strove to rescue a suffering people from prolonged and ever worse misrule. Under its new government, as worked by the noble Outram with the aid of a picked staff of English subalterns, the new British province would surely enter on the same path of orderly improvement which the Panjáb had already trodden with marked success. In Parliament there arose some talk about the Treaty of 1847, which had never been ratified by the Company, and which after all would have furnished no good reason against the course pursued in 1856. One or two speakers in the Commons might denounce our cruelty towards a king whose forefathers had helped the Company with timely loans, and whose subjects would prefer the worst evils of native misrule to the best and mildest government ever wielded by a set of strangers in race, in religion, in national feelings and ways of

* Had Lord Dalhousie been allowed his own way, the King might have been induced to sign the treaty rather than see the Resident and the subsidiary force withdrawn from Oudh. But this plan the Court of Directors had overruled.

thought. It was easy to show that the hands of the Company in dealing with former Nawábs of Oudh had not always been over clean. But the murmurs of a few were drowned in the general hubbub of assent to an issue which no impartial thinker could deem unrighteous, whatever blame might one day be heaped upon its nominal author by critics hastily judging from the event.*

* Trotter. Even Mr. E. Arnold, while condemning other of Dalhousie's annexations, had nothing but praise for the annexation of Oudh.

CHAPTER XI.

LAST RENEWAL OF THE COMPANY'S CHARTER.

For several years after the conquest of the Panjáb, the Government of India held no kind of intercourse with the Afghán ruler, whose horsemen had fled like frightened deer through the Khaibar before Gilbert's swift advance to Pesháwar. Content with seeing the Afgháns chased out of their last shelter in the Panjáb, Lord Dalhousie gave small heed to what Dost Mohammad might be doing or scheming among his native hills. The Amir of Kábul was left free to manage his unruly subjects, to reconquer Afghán Turkistán, to deal as he best could with the troublesome rulers of Herát and Kandáhár; and even, it was said, to encourage the border-tribes in their raids on British ground. But the steady progress of Persian intrigues with Herát at length induced the Amir to seek after a friendly understanding with his English neighbours. Colonel Herbert Edwardes, who had replaced the murdered Mackeson as Commissioner of Pesháwar, threw out in his turn some cautious overtures, to which our ancient foe sent back encouraging replies.

At last, in March, 1855, Gholám Haidar Khán, the Amir's favourite son, came down to Pesháwar to arrange a treaty of alliance with the Indian Government. He was met by John Lawrence, Chief Commissioner for the Panjáb. On the 30th, the two envoys concluded a treaty of "perpetual peace and friendship" between the East India Company and the dynasty of Dost Mohammad Khán. Each party pledged itself to respect the territories of the other, "and never to interfere therein;" while Dost Mohammad further engaged to be the friend of our friends and the enemy of our enemies. Such was the first step in that wiser policy which bore memorable fruit in 1857, and which, with one exception, Dalhousie's successors have since steadily pursued. And thus was a long-seething quarrel allayed by a process which, tried twenty years earlier, would have saved India

from all the costly and disastrous issues of the first Afghán War.*

In July of the same year, while the fate of Oudh still hung in the balance, the peace of India was rudely broken by a furious uprising of the hill-tribes in the north-west of Bengal. The Sánthals, whom Cleveland's kindliness had done so much to tame in the days of Warren Hastings, and whom a later benefactor, Mr. Pontet, had taught to cultivate the fruitful valleys of the Damin-i-Koh, had suddenly burst forth from their highland jungles to sweep down with the fury of a rain-swollen flood over the rich, well-peopled plains below. Maddened by the extortions of Bengáli money-lenders, who worked the law-courts freely for their own evil ends, and smarting under the brutal or licentious conduct of some English railway overseers, these simple, half-reclaimed savages marched forth in vast bodies under self-appointed leaders to lay their grievances before the Calcutta Council. Hunger, aided by superstition, soon turned their peaceful errand into a carnival of blood and plunder. Armed chiefly with axes and poisoned arrows, they carried fire and havoc into happy villages, attacked lonely bungalows, murdered stray Englishmen, Hindus, and Mohammadans, and even swarmed up to the chief civil stations in Rájmahal, Birbhúm, and Bhágalpur. A strange frenzy, fed by the eloquence of fanatic preachers, drove them forward in their thousands against the fat, ill-guarded provinces where dwelt their real or fancied foes.

The suddenness of the outbreak, and the time of year, were all in their favour. It was the height of the rainy season. No troops were at hand save the Hill-Rangers, whose loyalty might count for little against the ties of kinship and the calls of superstition. The authorities were taken utterly by surprise. Only in a few stations could small bodies of Europeans and policemen succeed in making a stand against such swarms of bloodthirsty assailants. From most places lying in the Sánthals' track all who could escaped while there was yet time. Panic-stricken villagers fled by thousands as from the horrors of another Marátha raid. The timely despatch of troops by rail from Calcutta alone saved from ruin the new engineering station of Rániganj, in the great coal district of Bardwán. But for the swift advance of a Sepoy detachment, all Birbhúm would have been given over to desolation. Between Rájmahal and Colgong the whole country was alight

* Kaye; Malleson; Afghan Blue-book; "Life of Sir H. Edwardes," by Lady Edwardes.

with blazing villages, and alive with plunder-laden fanatics. Half Bhágalpur came within the fiery circle. Murshidábád itself quaked for fear of a like disaster.*

Even when troops began to appear on the scene of havoc, the insurrection still held its ground at first. Broken up into small parties, the Sepoys could do little more than hold a few isolated posts against swarms of savages who fled before their musketry-fire, only to tease them with fresh attacks. If some of our troops did their duty nobly, others seem to have quailed before the numbers, the wild shouts, the poisoned arrows of the foe. Twice were the Hill-Rangers led forward against the Rájmahal plunderers, and twice, without seeming cause, they fell back. Out of a hundred Sepoys of the 56th Regiment, whom Lieutenant Toulmin led across a rivulet held by some thousands of Sánthals, twenty, with their bold commander, fell overpowered by numbers and cruel wounds. Erelong, however, as fresh troops entered the disturbed districts, the tide of disaster began to turn. Thousands of the enemy fled before handfuls of disciplined men, who fired steadily and kept a bold front. But the warfare that ensued was still harassing, for the beaten rebels found safe shelter and fresh means of annoyance in the close jungle that screened their movements. In some places the villagers were induced or compelled to furnish them with food and information. Mr. Halliday, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, had already urged the need of proclaiming martial law; but to all his arguments the Supreme Council still turned a deaf ear.

Early in September the Bhágalpur bands of rebels began to be hemmed in by General Lloyd's troops, while those in Birbhúm were hard pressed by the soldiers of Brigadier Bird. But the time for beating up the jungle was not yet come. Before the end of the month, Birbhúm became the scene of fresh horrors; the Sánthals and the cholera shared the land between them. Gorged with the spoils of a province, the insurgents seemed like to carry them off with little hindrance from troops assailed in their turn and driven back by the prevailing sickness. Thousands of Sánthals had already fallen by shot or disease; hundreds, including Sidu Mánji, their foremost leader, had been taken prisoners; but so much the larger was the booty left to share among the surviving hosts.

With the cooler air and the cloudless sunshine of November came a visible change for the better on the face of things. While

* Trotter; Hunter's "Rural Bengal."

the great Proconsul was still resting his shattered frame in the Blue Mountains, his colleagues in the Calcutta Council made up their slow minds to a measure which might as easily have been decreed three or four months earlier. On the 10th of November Mr. Halliday could at length proclaim martial law throughout the disturbed districts. Fresh troops were brought upon the scene; a general burning of insurgent villages began; and the jungle ceased to be a safe shelter for foes hard pressed by assailants no longer afraid of fever or the law. Cut up in detail, their booty melting away behind them, most of their leaders shot or taken, only to be hanged after due trial, the insurgents, by December, were making off in small parties to the hills, or slinking away by twos and threes to their former homes and employments in the plains. During that month the last of the captured ringleaders underwent his doom of death or imprisonment; and the last body of armed rebels were hunted down. On the last day of the year Lloyd's field-force was broken up; and on the 3rd of January, 1856, martial law was declared no longer needful in a land where open rebellion had died down. In view of the grievances which had caused the outbreak, the Sánthál country was detached from the regular government of Bengal, and made over as a "non-regulation" province to the less rigid rule of a special commissioner, Mr. Stainforth, aided by one deputy and five assistant commissioners.*

But the Government was reckoning without its rebellious subjects. In the middle of January, while the troops were marching back to their cantonments, bands of armed savages began once more plundering villages, destroying factories, threatening the property and the lives of loyal Englishmen and Bengális. This, however, was but the last flickering of a burnt-out flame. Before the end of February quiet reigned anew, to be broken only for a week or two in May by the last efforts of a few desperadoes to breathe life into a stiffening corpse. Meanwhile most of the late insurgents were glad enough to earn once more their daily rice by hard work on the new lines of railway, on the roads, in factories, in any field of labour still open to their strong arms and simple needs. But the Nemesis of their past folly dogged them still; for the lands they had left untilled during the outbreak withheld their wonted harvests, and thousands of starving wretches died that year in the jungles, or scarce kept body and soul together on the slender outcome of their day's toil.†

Reference has just been made to Mr. Frederick Halliday as

* Trotter. † Ibid.

Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. This office, which Lord Dalhousie's able Secretary was the first to hold, had been created by the Charter Act of 1853. It was a measure the need for which had been growing more and more urgent for years past. Down to the close of 1853 the Governor-General of India was also the official Governor of Bengal. During his absence from the Presidency—for many years past a common event—the senior member of his Council ruled as Deputy-Governor in his stead. The Deputy-Governor might be a civilian of standing and experience; he might also be a successful soldier who knew nothing of the duties he was supposed to discharge. On his return to Calcutta the Governor-General would resume his post for a few months, and then perhaps a new deputy would fill his place. Owing to the frequent change of its head—ten times in eleven years—and to the ever-growing demands upon the Governor-General's time, the government of the largest and wealthiest province in India practically devolved upon the chief secretary, who was wholly irresponsible for the success or failure of his rule. Under this haphazard system it was not surprising that even Mr. Halliday's skill, industry, and experience had failed in various ways to keep Bengal abreast of some other provinces ruled by a separate and responsible chief.* The subsequent history of that great province, now peopled by sixty million souls, has amply justified the wisdom of the reform effected in 1853.

Several other changes of equal or greater moment were brought about by the memorable Charter Act of that year. The term for which a new lease of power had been granted to the Company in 1833 was fast expiring when the question of its renewal came up before the British Parliament. For many months both in India and at home that question had been discussed from many different points of view by the friends and enemies of the chartered Company whose fate once more hung in the balance. Whatever happened, it was almost certain that the powers and patronage of the India House would undergo some further curtailment. During 1852 Select Committees of both Houses sat to take evidence from a host of witnesses, to con over piles of papers, and to summarize the chief results. On the 3rd of June, 1853, Sir Charles Wood, as President of the India Board in the coalition Ministry of Lord Aberdeen, brought before the Commons his Bill for the future government of India. This bill, which he took five hours to explain, proposed to retain the double government by the Court

* Chesney; Marshman.

of Directors and the Board of Control. But the working strength of the former was to be cut down from twenty-four to eighteen, six of whom were to be chosen by the Crown from among men who had served ten years in India. The remaining twelve would still be elected by the Court of Proprietors. A heavy blow was struck at the Company's patronage by the clauses which opened Addiscombe and Haileybury, the military and the civil training-college, to free competition among the British youth. A special legislative council was to be engrafted on the Government of India. The government of Bengal, as we have seen, was to be made over to a separate Lieutenant-Governor, subject to the final control of the Governor-General.

The question of amalgamating the Sadr Adálat or High Court of the Company in each Presidency with the Supreme Court of the Crown, for the better administration of justice throughout British India, had already engaged the minds of reforming statesmen at home. But no immediate change in this direction was formally demanded by the framers of the present Bill. Provision was made for raising the pay of the lower native judges, and for throwing open to the "uncovenanted" or local services some of the posts hitherto reserved for covenanted civilians or Haileybury men. A Law Commission, sitting in England, was to consider and report upon the reforms already contemplated in the laws of India. Finally, the Crown claimed for itself the right to sanction the appointment of every advocate-general and member of Council under the Indian Government.

Some lively debates ensued in Parliament on a scheme which satisfied neither the friends nor the foes of the East India Company. Foremost among the latter was Mr. Bright, who scoffed at the new plan for improving the old Directorate by mixing "one grain of wholesome nutriment with two grains of poison." Sir James Hogg's eloquent defence of the Company against all assailants touched the fancy of his hearers without winning their votes. On the 9th of June the Bill was read a first time. On the 23rd its second reading was opposed by Lord Stanley with a counter-motion for further delay in passing a Bill which disturbed everything and settled nothing. A debate of four nights, enlivened by Macaulay's winning rhetoric and Sir James Graham's statesmanlike reasoning on the one side, by Mr. Bright's outspoken vehemence and the glancing mockeries of Mr. Disraeli on the other, ended in the rejection of Lord Stanley's amendment by a majority of more than two to one in a House of four hundred and sixty-

two. On the last night of June the Bill was read a second time.

On the 8th of July it entered into Committee. Clause after clause was keenly debated; amendment after amendment delayed the passage but failed to modify any feature of the Bill save one. Sir Charles Wood forestalled a hostile vote by exempting Addiscombe from the change reserved for Haileybury. After two or three fresh clauses had been added to the Bill, its third reading was carried on the 29th of July.

On the 1st of August Lord Granville introduced it to the Peers, who, anxious to get away from London, received it on the whole with a ready grace. Twelve days later it passed its third reading, after undergoing a very slight revision in Committee. On the 15th the Commons finally accepted the Bill, to which the Royal signature presently gave the one touch wanting to make it law. Thus by a measure expressly workable only so long as Parliament might will, was carried some steps further the inevitable process of transferring the lordship of India from the hands of a chartered Company into those of the British Crown.

In accordance with the new Act, the first sittings of a new Legislative Council were held in Calcutta in May 1854. It was, in fact, the old Supreme Council enlarged for the special purpose of making laws for all India. While the old Council retained all its executive functions, its legislative powers were transferred to the larger body of which it still formed the nucleus. Of the thirteen members composing the new Council, four were chosen from the Civil Service to represent the several governments of Bengal, Agra, Madras, and Bombay, while two were judges of the Supreme Court of Bengal, whose sympathies would naturally lean to the side of their unofficial countrymen, the small but ever-growing community of merchants, planters, tradesmen, missionaries, engineers, scattered through the provinces or clustering in the chief cities of India. Two other members were appointed by the Governor-General himself. To sanguine persons it seemed as if the new body contained the germ of a true parliament, in which at some future day the voice of all ranks and races in India might make itself heard to good purpose. Almost from the beginning its debates were conducted with open doors, and the dull old process of reading out a number of carefully written minutes was soon exchanged for the simpler if less stately arbitrament of quick-flowing talk.*

* Chesney; Trotter.

There is little need for comment on other features in the Act of 1853. When Lord Dalhousie left India, the fruits of open competition for the Company's Civil Service had hardly begun to show themselves; nor had the new element in the India House Board done aught to hinder or derange Lord Dalhousie's settled policy towards the native princes. Events, moreover, were soon to happen which paved the way for a change in the Company's fortunes far greater and more radical than any decreed or generally desired by English statesmen a few years before.

In less than a month after the annexation of Oudh the great Proconsul yielded up the reins of government into the hands of his successor, Lord Canning.* Since the days of Warren Hastings no Governor-General had won so high, so lasting a place in the annals of British India as the high-bred Scotch nobleman who, after eight years of incessant toil, marked by a long array of brilliant successes in the cabinet, in the field, in every sphere of public usefulness, left Calcutta on the 6th March, 1856, broken down in body, maimed in his dearest affections by the recent death of his sonless wife, but upheld in spirit by the recollection of great things attempted, of great ends achieved at an age when in England most public men have their honours all to win. Not even Wellesley had brought under the British yoke so fair a cluster of new provinces as the viceroy during whose rule the Panjáb, Pegu, Oudh, Nágpur, and various smaller realms had passed away from their native masters. And no former viceroy could have pointed to a list of public services nearly as great and numerous as those recounted by Dalhousie himself in the noble minute—the masterwork of a pen as clear, direct, and polished as Cæsar's or Wellington's—which summed up and vindicated his Indian career. That he left the Panjáb peaceful, prosperous, and well-governed, Pegu fairly started on the same course, Oudh quietly accepting her change of masters, the Indian treasury overflowing with cash balances, all India thriving under the new impulses given with no grudging hand to the industry, the trade, the moral and social advancement of her people—for these manifold blessings the chief share of our praise must be awarded to Dalhousie himself, the one quickening spirit of a Government always able, but commonly slow moving and shy of wandering off the old beaten tracks.

* Standing beside the former, Lawrence asked him what he felt at such a moment in his career. "I wish that I were in Canning's place, and he in mine, and then—wouldn't I govern India!" was the first impulsive reply. "But no!" he added, "I could not wish my worst enemy to be the poor, miserable, broken-down man I am now"—(Bosworth-Smith).

It was this forward statesmanship which enabled Sir W. O'Shaughnessy to cover India with telegraph wires in time to break the full force of the blow that fell upon her in 1857. To Dalhousie also was it mainly owing that before he left Calcutta the new railway was carrying its thousands daily between Howrah and Rániganj; that the Ganges Canal had begun to fertilize a long belt of plain from Hardwár down to Cawnpore; that great public works of every kind were pushed on at one same moment in many different parts of the broad Peninsula. Bengal nearly freed from the old plague of gang-robberies, the wild tribes on the Panjáb frontier reduced to comparative order, all India blessed with a cheap postage, all inland customs duties finally done away, some other taxes lightened or revised, trial by jury established throughout the land, the rights of inheritance secured to native Christians, the beginnings of a great reform in jail-discipline—such are among the lesser achievements that help to light up the memory of this great Indian governor. Nearly the last of his public services was an order bidding the heads of the different provinces send in yearly to Calcutta a full but concise report of the progress made under each government during the past year. All matters of the least public moment, each improvement in legislation, in finance, in judicial business, each new outlay on public works—everything, in short, that concerned the welfare of the people in each province, might thus from time to time be grouped together in one general view, for the ultimate good of the whole empire, through the wholesome rivalry stimulated by these reports among its subordinate rulers.

Like "the glorious little man" who ruled India in the first years of the same century, Lord Dalhousie had the gift of drawing around him a band of subalterns quick to appreciate and zealous to further the plans of a chief whose thorough mastery of smaller details rarely tempted him to encroach upon the free action of any officer once found worthy of his trust. If two such stars as Napier and Dalhousie could not long shine together in the same heaven, the fault at any rate did not lie with him whose steady greatness at once enhanced and caught fresh lustre from the bright achievements of such men as John Lawrence, Thomason, Montgomery, and Phayre. Like Napoleon amidst his marshals did the great Marquis stand forth, the centre of a group of worthies only less conspicuous than himself. Under his leading there had grown up a school of statesmen whose services in the fiery trial of the Great Mutiny redounded hardly more to their own glory than to that of

the Master who then lay slowly dying in his Northern home; his past achievements denounced on all sides as a splendid failure, leading up to its natural issue in a wide-spread and nearly successful revolt.

Of those who were afterwards to join in casting down their former idol, very few were to be found among the helpmates or the near witnesses of his rule in India. The hold he had once gained by the twofold spell of genius and personal bearing was not to be weakened by the rash charges of those home-bred critics who taught their countrymen to believe that his policy of State-absorption had brought about the Mutiny of 1857. They saw that, with rare exceptions, none of the annexed provinces showed any desire to rise against their new masters, that the soldiers of the Panjáb fought by our side at Delhi and Lucknow, that British Burmah remained tranquil in the absence of British troops, and that none, in fact, of the great native princes made common cause with their rebel countrymen. And they remembered that, even in annexing Oudh by order of the home Government, he had strongly insisted on the need of largely reinforcing the British garrison in India. The demand for troops from India to feed the war in the Crimea had drawn forth from Lord Dalhousie an earnest if vain protest against the reduction of a force which even then had seemed to him barely adequate for the peaceful maintenance of our rule over so many peoples alien to us "in religion, in language, in colour, in habits, in all feelings and interests."* If, imbued with the growing temper of his time, he sometimes overrode or misreckoned the strength of native feeling, it was clearly no fault of his that the ship he had steered so long with unchanging fortune was afterwards all but lost through the blind economy which kept down the numbers of her English crew. If his advice had been followed, if the prayer of the India House for leave to raise more English regiments of their own had been granted betimes by Downing Street, the revolt of 1857 might never have broken out—would never, at least, have gained so formidable a head.†

It were waste of time to defend Dalhousie from the charge of blindness to coming events. There is no evidence that any Englishman, not even Sir H. Lawrence, foresaw the storm which burst upon India in 1857. How, indeed, could any one foreguess that the mere accident of a few greased cartridges would raise a whole Sepoy army in furious revolt? That India was full of combustibles Dalhousie knew as well as others; but no one, how-

* Dalhousie's Minute of 1855. † Trotter; Marshman.

ever prescient, could have predicted when and how the explosion would take place. "It is the unforeseen that happens," and to the truth of this proverb the great Sepoy rising added only a new illustration. It is absurd to suppose that so clear-headed a statesman ignored one potent source of danger to our rule, because he quarrelled with Napier on a matter of form and could see little room for improvement in the position of the native soldier. At the time when he recorded this opinion, in the very last days of his rule, he penned a series of minutes on the Indian armies, the gist of which was to show the need of reducing Sepoy troops in Bengal by fourteen thousand, and strengthening the British infantry by seven battalions.*

Against the reproaches afterwards levelled at him by his countrymen at home, ignorant of the facts and eager only to punish somebody, no matter whom, may be set the many tokens of public gratitude, admiration, reverence, even love, which brightened the last hours of Dalhousie's rule. At the capitals of the three Presidencies crowded meetings were held in his honour, and the speeches at Calcutta bore special witness to the breadth and depth of that regard which the fame of his services and the force of his kingly nature had bred in all classes of a very mixed community. Among the farewell addresses that reached him from all parts of the country was one presented by the indigo planters of Bengal, a body of men by no means given to praising a viceroy without good cause. Not a journalist in India but added his own offering to the general heap. Hardly an officer, civil or military, but spoke with regretful pride of the ruler whose past career seemed to attest his fitness for the highest office open to any statesman at home. Among intelligent natives of all races the name of the great Lord Sáhib was honoured with the reverence due to a genuine king of men. On the day of his departure all Calcutta thronged the Maidán and the banks of the Húghli to see his carriage pass down from Government House to the stairs of Chandpál Ghát.†

Nor were the Court of Directors backward in honouring the successful ruler whose zeal for the welfare of a vast dependency had wrought no harm to the worldly interests of his employers. The grant of a pension of five thousand a year, awarded by the India House and confirmed by a large majority of the proprietors in special meeting assembled, was announced in a resolution whose very length, unavoidable for all its studied brevity of phrase,

* Marshman. † Trotter; Arnold.

attested the recipient's right to whatever bounty a rich and grateful Company could bestow.

Too soon for his country, not too soon for his own fame, James Andrew Ramsay's public life closed with his departure from the East. All too sadly prophetic were the words in which he assured the people of Calcutta that he had played out his part, and would be content if the curtain should now drop upon his public career. Out of the retirement for which alone he was just then fit he never passed, save into the deeper retirement of the grave. On the 19th of December, 1860, after a lingering illness of four years, the great Marquis of Dalhousie had ceased to breathe.

NOTE.

Lady Edwardes has made it clear, in the Life of her Husband, as lately published, that the Treaty of 1855 with Dost Mohammad was originated by Edwardes himself, to whom Dalhousie gave *carte blanche* in an undertaking which seemed to him "most desirable, but most difficult to bring about." John Lawrence, for his part, held that any such treaty would "end in mixing us up in Afghan politics and affairs more than is desirable." Dalhousie himself proposed that the Treaty should be signed by its virtual author; but, at Edwardes's own suggestion, that duty was allotted to the Chief Commissioner, who declared in a letter to Edwardes that "all the merit of the affair, whatever it may be, is yours."

BOOK III.

LORD CANNING.

1856–57.

CHAPTER I.

THE PERSIAN WAR.

On the 29th of February, 1856, Lord Canning took his seat in the Calcutta Council as Governor-General of India in the room of Lord Dalhousie. Third son of the brilliant George Canning, winner at Oxford of all but the highest honours, he had succeeded in 1837 to the peerage bestowed upon his father's widow. A hard-working member of the Peel Ministry from 1841 to 1846, he again took office in 1853 as Postmaster-General in the cabinet of his old chief, Lord Aberdeen; and this post he retained in the Liberal Ministry of Lord Palmerston. In the summer of 1855 his name was formally submitted to the India House as that of a fit successor to his old friend, the great Marquis of Dalhousie. The Court of Directors accepted as a thing of course the nominee of the Board of Control. About the wisdom of such a choice few save Lord Canning's official colleagues and intimate friends were competent to judge; and the fame of so great a predecessor would have overshadowed the path of any statesman coming close after him, however splendid his actual deserts. But the time seemed favourable to moderate talent; it only remained for the new ruler to tread firmly in Dalhousie's footsteps, to follow up his peaceful victories; and after all, in this case, as in that of most other viceroys, the future alone could test the wisdom of an appointment on which neither public knowledge nor common rumour could throw any informing light.

Lord Canning at any rate had a deep conviction of the heavy task that lay before him, and a strong desire to spare no effort of mind or body in discharging the duties he had nerved himself to undertake. To this effect he spoke with the eloquence of sincerity at the inaugural dinner which the Court of Directors gave him on the 1st of August, 1855. And the spirit of prophecy seemed to weigh down and solemnize the closing words in which he uttered his hopes and fears for the future. "I wish," he said,

"for a peaceful time of office, but I cannot forget that in our Indian Empire that greatest of all blessings depends upon a greater variety of chances and a more precarious tenure than in any other quarter of the globe. We must not forget that in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, at first no bigger than a man's hand, but which, growing larger and larger, may at last threaten to burst and overwhelm us with ruin. What has happened once may happen again."*

On his landing in Calcutta it was still the cloudless sky that greeted the new Governor-General. During the first months of his rule there was little to withdraw his mind from the daily round of administrative duty. The war with Russia had ended in a peace dictated by France and England. Peace and order once more reigned throughout India. Oudh gave no cause for present disquietude, although the mother of its late sovereign was gone to lay her sorrows and her son's grievances at the feet of the British Queen. While Jang Bahádur was leading his Nipalese to victory against the warriors of Tibet, while Dost Mohammad was strengthening his hold on Kandáhár, and debating whether he should help the ruler of Herát against the Persians, British India seemed free in peace and safety to work out the strange new problems of her inner life. Through all her provinces the spirit of an eager, masterful, inventive Anglicism was threatening to force its way through the last barriers of Eastern prejudice, sluggishness, and self-content. India, once conquered by the might of British arms, was being conquered afresh by the resistless workings of British civilization as expressed in the school, the steamship, the railway, and the electric telegraph. Obeying half-unconsciously the inevitable law in all such cases, the stronger race was gradually setting its mark, for better for worse, upon the weaker. Each new blow struck at the social barbarisms sanctioned by the priests of Brahma or Mahomet seemed like hewing another foothold up the icy steep of ancient superstitions. Each new school or college opened for the teaching of English law helped to Anglicize, even perhaps to Christianize, the youth of Bombay and Bengal. The very elements of modern science could not but clash with the time-old philosophy of Brahman pandits, and the strong fanaticism of Mohammadan maulvies. While Old Bengal was vainly gnashing its teeth at the growing ascendency of English ideas, Young India was every day giving fresh proofs of zeal, if not for the spirit, at least for the forms of Western civilization. If a taste

* Kaye.

for reading English books, for speaking the English language, for dressing, dining, disporting after the English fashion, for abjuring all kinds of religious doctrine, old or new, passed with many a young Hindu for a faithful copying of the best English models, many another of the same race seemed really bent on carrying the spirit of the new movement into matters more nearly touching the national life. A school of earnest reformers, who found in the oldest of Hindu scriptures the sources of a pure and sufficing Theism, followed the lead of Debendranáth Thákur along the path first trodden by Rajah Rammohan Rai and his zealous disciple Dwarkanáth Thákur. In the chief towns of India many a native gentleman spent his money freely in the cause of popular instruction. In the city and district of Agra alone one Gopál Singh, a sub-inspector of schools, succeeded in starting ninety-seven girls' schools, which contained an average of twenty pupils each.*

Through all ranks and classes, into the very strongholds of Hindu orthodoxy, the new leaven was slowly working its way. Few of the more enlightened Hindus protested against the Bill promoted by Lord Dalhousie, and passed in July 1856 by Lord Canning, for enabling Hindu widows to marry again. When Lord Canning's Government brought in a Bill to do away with the curious form of polygamy practised by the Kúlin Brahmans of Bengal, the petitions in its favour were signed not only by a crowd of lesser names, but even by the high-bred Rajahs of Nadiya and Dinájpur, and the yet more illustrious Mahárája of Bardwán. The evil thus denounced might fairly be deemed a reproach not more to Western morals than to the spirit of Hindu philosophy. That a high-caste Hindu, whose wife bore him no male heir, might marry a second, a third, or a fourth time, was indeed a vital part of the national religion. But the license by which a Brahman of the privileged Kúlin stock might take to himself ten, twenty, or fifty wives, some of whom he visited not once a year, while most of them still lived in their fathers' houses at their fathers' cost, widows in all but name, was accounted by numbers of honest Hindus as a gross misreading of the sacred text and a source of unbounded mischief to the national morals. For reasons of weight, however, Mr. John Grant's Bill was dropped after its first reading; but the humanity which prompted it gave a new handle to the ignorant and the bigoted for charging the Government with a deep-laid plot against the religious creeds of its subjects.

* Trotter.

Another measure which displeased the bulk of orthodox Hindus was the General Order issued in July, binding all future recruits for the native armies to enlist for general service, whether within or beyond the Company's dominions. Enlistment for such service had hitherto been confined to six regiments of the Bengal Army, while every Sepoy in Bombay and Madras was always liable for service beyond sea. The last warrant for an ordinance long since suggested by the contrast between an average Bengal Sepoy, tall, showy, soldier-like on parade, but spoilt by long indulgence and overweening pride of caste, and his smaller, meaner-looking, but handier and better disciplined comrade in Madras or Bombay, had been furnished by the mutinous conduct of more than one Bengal regiment at the outset of the last Burmese War. When the Hindu soldiers of the South and West, when the Sikhs and Mohammadans of the Panjáb were ready to go anywhither, by land or sea, at their masters' bidding, it seemed intolerable that a number of fine gentlemen from Oudh and Rohilkhand should turn restive at the bare prospect of crossing the "dark water" between Calcutta and Rangoon. The new ordinance, which placed all recruits on the same level of general usefulness, aimed, like Lord Dalhousie's plan of enlisting Sikhs into the regular infantry, to uproot that tyranny of the upper castes which, long the reproach, was shortly to prove the ruin, of the Bengal Army. Such a reform, however wise in itself, or needful for the future holding of Pegu, could not fail to deepen the mistrust already working in the hearts of those long-favoured monopolists, the Brahman and Rájput soldiery of Bengal. To men who had long since come to look on service under the Company as their special birthright, guarded by conditions unchanged for years, any attempt to throw that service open to others seemed like a wilful breach of faith on the part of their ungrateful masters.*

Before the year's end Mr. Barnes Peacocke laid before the Legislative Council a Bill for supplying all India with a new code of criminal law, modelled on the pattern which more than twenty years earlier had been drawn out by Macaulay himself. Bandied about from Calcutta to England, from one official to another, consigned for several years to utter oblivion, then curtailed, revised, and polished up by Drinkwater Bethune, the Macaulay code had undergone a fresh course of criticism and revision before it found a new godfather in the Law member of Canning's Council. But the day of its final enthronement was still to come. In spite of

* Kaye; Trotter.

fresh outcries against the cruelty of placing Englishmen and natives under one common system of law, and against the danger of abolishing the old distinctions between the courts of the Company and those of the Crown, a Penal Code at once clear, concise, rational, and comprehensive, would presently have supplanted the old tangled wilderness of Hindu, Mohammadan, Company's and common law, had the second year of Lord Canning's rule proved nearly as peaceful as the first. Unhappily Mr. Peacocke's bill had not passed its second reading when the worst storm that ever broke over British India turned the attention of Lord Canning's Council to matters of far more pressing moment than the reform of a penal system.*

The compact which Lord Dalhousie had made with Prince Fakr-ud-din of Delhi came, as we have seen, to naught with the sudden death of the latter in July 1856. The old King of Delhi, prompted by his favourite wife, Zinat Mahal, besought leave to proclaim as heir-apparent her son, Jawán Bakht, a youth brought up by his mother in bitter hatred to the English name. Several of his elder brothers urged the same request; but Mirza Mohammad Korásh, the King's eldest surviving son, pleaded earnestly his own right to the position claimed for the Benjamin of the house, and he did not plead in vain. Lord Canning refused to acknowledge any other heir than Prince Mohammad Korásh. But he went even further than Lord Dalhousie in reducing the value of the boon thus granted. The Prince was informed that on his father's death the Royal family would have to quit the Palace, that the kingly title would become extinct, and that he himself would thenceforth hold the rank and title of a mere Sháhzáda, or prince, on a monthly pension of 15,000 rupees.†

If the old King was ready to accept the decrees of fate, his ambitious Queen, Zinat Mahal, refused to recognize the failure of her dearest hopes. Her emissaries went forth from Delhi to stir up the smouldering fires of Musalman discontent in many parts of Upper India, and to sound the feelings of Mohammadan princes elsewhere. The trail of her intrigues was soon to become visible in places far removed from the palace-stronghold on the Jamna. But for the time our countrymen in India paid little heed to passing rumours, in view of the seeming indifference shown by the citizens of Delhi to the storm that raged within the old palace walls.

* Trotter. † Kaye.

Meanwhile, in Oudh itself the new rule prepared by Lord Dalhousie seemed quietly gaining ground among the people. When Outram's broken health compelled him to take his hard-earned furlough to England, the post of Chief Commissioner was transferred to Mr. Coverley Jackson, a civil officer of good repute in the North-West Provinces. Under the new chief the work of resettling the land-revenue "village by village, with the parties actually in possession," went forward in accordance with the spirit of Dalhousie's own instructions. The assessments were arranged with village proprietors, wherever such could be found, and in default of such with the Tálukdár, or lord of the manor. That those Tálukdárs, the barons of Oudh, were not on the whole unfairly treated, appears from the fact that three-fifths of the villages claimed as theirs were "settled" with Tálukdárs alone, many of whom had no more right to their property than that conferred by successful fraud or force.*

Unluckily the Chief Commissioner had a temper which was always jarring more or less noisily against that of his Financial Commissioner, Martin Gubbins. It soon became evident that one or the other would have to go elsewhither, and Lord Canning resolved in the public interest that Mr. Jackson should be the one to go. In January, 1857, he invited Sir Henry Lawrence to exchange the lighter duties of Resident at Ajmir for the post of Chief Commissioner at Lucknow. Sick as he was in mind and body, the erewhile ruler of the Panjáb threw up the furlough he had just obtained to England, and prepared with a cheerful heart to take up the duties of his new post. On the 20th of March he entered the populous and splendid city which, stretching four miles along the Gúmti, has been likened both to Moscow and Constantinople. In spite, or perhaps by reason of the work that fell upon his shoulders, his health seemed to improve, and he found himself "calmer and quieter than he had been for years."† The doors of the Residency were once more thrown open to natives of all classes, especially to the nobles and traders, who flocked to his "Darbárs," or came to pour their grievances, cares, and hopes into his private ear. From such interviews none returned without pleasant memories of a patient listener and a sympathetic friend. Under a chief so wise, so lovable, so widely trusted, the leading members of the Oudh Commission ceased from wrangling and settled down to their work, while the people at large looked hopefully forward

* Irwin. † Merivale.

to the dawn of a just, strong, and merciful rule.* But Sir Henry had come to his new post a year too late. Already the little cloud which betokened a mighty danger to the British power was beginning to darken and overspread the sky.

Before the end of 1856 Lord Canning's hopes of peace had been thwarted by the outbreak of a war with Persia, in which the Company's troops and warships were destined to play a prominent part. In 1851 the son and successor of Yar Mohammad at Herát had offered to become the vassal of the Shah of Persia. To such an offer the Shah could not but turn a willing ear. He prepared to clinch the bargain by sending an army to occupy Herát. This challenge to English tenderness about the Key of India the British Government was in no mood to shirk. Colonel Sheil, our envoy at Tehrán, warned the Shah against the folly of a course which would ultimately land him in a war with England. It was not till the beginning of 1853 that the wilful monarch recalled his troops, and signed a treaty pledging him always to respect the independence of Herát.

But Násr-ud-din still hankered after the forbidden fruit. His opportunity came towards the end of 1855, when Mr. Murray, Sheil's successor at Tehrán, found himself compelled, by a long course of studied insults, to strike his flag and withdraw his Mission to Bághdád. In the first month of the following year the Persian troops occupied Herát. A revolution in that city soon drove them out; but a few months later Isá Khán rose against his master, the Saduzai Prince of Herát, and before the end of October, 1856, the successful rebel had surrendered to the Persian commander the very stronghold which, three years before, the Shah had promised never to attack.†

It is not unlikely that a little timely aid lent by Lord Canning to Dost Mohammad would have averted that war with Persia, which now seemed inevitable; but, in spite of Persia's broken pledges, the Governor-General had been very loath to entangle himself in the maze of Central Asian politics, even when the Home Government counselled him to help the Amír of Kábul with arms and money, and empowered him to send a Mission to Herát. He was slow to move in any matter until he could see his way clearly, and at last events were forcing him to move in the direction he least desired. On the 1st of November, 1856, reluctantly obeying the orders received from England, Lord Canning

* Kaye; Merivale; Gubbins's "Mutinies in Oudh."

† Kaye; Rawlinson.

proclaimed war with Persia in the name of the East India Company.*

For some weeks past Bombay had been astir with preparations for a naval and military armament destined to attack Busháhr in the Persian Gulf. By the 13th of November the last ships of the Bombay squadron were steering away for Maskat. Forty-five vessels, including eight war-steamers of the Indian Navy, carried a compact force of about 5,700 soldiers, of whom more than a third were English. Sir Henry Leeke commanded the fleet; the land forces were under the command of Major-General Stalker during the absence of Sir James Outram, who, driven home by sickness early in the year, seemed suddenly to grow well again a few months later in his eagerness to undertake the leadership of a new campaign. While he was yet journeying to Bombay, his lieutenant was already striking the first blow of the war. The island of Karrak was occupied on the 4th of December. By the 8th Stalker's troops had all been landed in Halila Bay, twelve miles south-west of Busháhr, under cover of a well-aimed fire from the men-of-war. Next morning, the whole force advanced in concert, the fleet waiting upon the movements of the land column, while the enemy kept falling back upon Rusháhr, an old Dutch fort that commanded the approach to Busháhr itself.

A telling fire from the fleet smoothed the advance of Stopford's and Honner's brigades over the broken ground covering the village and the fort. Tramping steadily forward under a heavy matchlock fire, while a squadron of horse and a few light guns scattered the enemy on their left flank, the assailants carried with the bayonet one line of works after another. The Shah's Arab troops fought well, but better discipline bore down equal courage backed by larger numbers. One more brilliant rush,† in which Stopford himself and Colonel Malet of the 3rd Cavalry fell dead, drove the enemy out of the fort itself, at a cost to the victors of forty-one slain or wounded during the day.

Meanwhile Captain Felix Jones of the Indian Navy had been sent in a small steamer under a flag of truce towards Busháhr itself, with the usual summons to surrender the town, and with liberal offers of shelter to such of the townsfolk and merchants as might choose to seek it. But some batteries opening fire on the

* Kaye. The treaty of 1853 pledged us to try and restrain other Powers from attacking Herát. But that treaty Persia had broken in 1855.

† "One of the most brilliant and gallant charges I have ever witnessed"—are the words of Sir H. Leeke's Despatch.

Assyria, in spite of the flag she bore, compelled him to turn back. An apology was afterwards offered and accepted; the summons found its way ashore; but no answer came that evening. The troops lay that night on the ground they had won. On the morning of the 10th, in pursuance of a plan concerted with General Stalker, the British Admiral laid four steamers and eight gunboats within range of a lofty tower and redoubt that guarded the city walls. In the course of an hour the Persian troops were seen retreating into the town itself. A prayer for twenty-four hours' grace was now brought off shore, but Leeke's only answer was to grant the messenger half an hour "to get out of the way of our shot." By eight o'clock the whole squadron had forced its way through the muddy shallows to form line of battle against the town, which our troops were already preparing to attack. Each ship was laid aground within short range of the enemy's works. For some four hours the strife raged between the ships and the batteries on shore. The enemy's shot told upon the masts and rigging and sometimes pierced the hulls of our men-of-war. Showers of grape rattled among the gunboats. At length four of the Persian batteries were put to silence; and the fire from the rest was clearly slackening, as the British columns drew near the town. To aid their progress, the guns of the fleet were now turned upon the south-western angle of the city wall. A breach was soon opened, and the troops began forming up for the assault, when the cutting down of the Persian flagstaff announced a peaceful ending to that day's fight.*

This happened about noon. Two hours later, after many of the garrison had made good their escape, the rest, to the number of two thousand, followed the Persian Governor out of the surrendered stronghold and grounded arms in front of the British line. Next morning they were set free to go anywhither beyond the British outposts. Sixty-five guns and a great quantity of warlike stores had fallen into the victors' hands without the loss of a single soldier or seaman.

For some weeks no further movement worth naming took place on the field of war. Havelock's division was still at Bombay, where Sir James Outram, having come thus far, awaited fresh news from England and Bushâhr. Diplomacy, however, was turning the interval to good account. On the outbreak of war with Persia, Herbert Edwardes, the Commissioner of Peshâwar, urged the Governor-General to follow up the Treaty of March, 1855, by a still

* Despatches of Sir H. Leeke and Captain Jones; Low; Trotter.

closer alliance with Dost Mohammad, who wanted but little encouragement from India to turn his arms against the conquerer of Herát. With Lord Canning's full consent he invited the old Amir to meet Sir John Lawrence—for such he had now become—on the borders of Pesháwar. Dost Mohammad's answer proved the soundness of Edwardes's calculations. On New Year's Day, 1857, Lawrence, Edwardes, and a few other British officers exchanged friendly greetings with the Amir and two of his sons near the mouth of the Khaibar Pass. A series of conferences held on the plain below the Pass resulted in a treaty which bound the Indian Government to furnish Dost Mohammad with 4,000 stand of arms at once, and with a lakh of rupees—£10,000—a month so long as the war might last, or the Indian Government might choose to pay it. The Afghán ruler agreed on his part to maintain a friendly intercourse with his English ally, to acquaint him with any overtures made by their common foe, and to let British officers reside at Kábul, Balkh, or Kandáhár, for the sole purpose of reporting matters to their own Government and of seeing "that the subsidy granted to the Amir be devoted to the military purposes for which it is given." For their safety and honourable treatment during their stay in his country, the Amir promised to take all possible care. The treaty further provided that when the time came to withdraw these officers, a vakil or native envoy from India should take up his abode at Kábul, while the Amir's vakil should be quartered at Pesháwar.

The treaty was signed on the 26th January. If the Amir had not gained all that he expected, he seemed thankful for what he had secured. On one point only, the reception of a British officer at his own capital, where the memories of English meddling were still green, the old man pleaded so hard, with so much of practical reason, that Lawrence agreed, not indeed to revise the clause in question, but to forbear from exacting its full performance. It was felt that the presence of English officers at Kábul for any purpose, however temporary, would inflame Afghán feeling to a point disastrous alike to the Amir's interest and to ours. So Lawrence pacified his new friend by assuring him that the intended mission under Major Henry Lumsden of the Guides should go no further than Kandáhár.* And when, at that last interview with the English envoys, the white-bearded Afghán closed a friendly speech by vowing to keep till death his new alliance with his ancient foes, some, at least, of his hearers knew how loyally he would keep his word.

* Afghan Blue-book; Kaye; Trotter.

By that time Outram and Havelock, with two fresh brigades, were fast nearing the British camp outside Busháhr. There, on the 27th of January, Outram learned that great preparations were on foot to wrest from his keeping the most important outlet of Persian trade. Forty-six miles off, at Burasjun, on the road to Shiráz, the Persian commander had got together a force of seven or eight thousand men with eighteen or twenty guns. Outram resolved to attack him at once. Leaving a sufficient garrison at Busháhr, he marched off on the evening of February 3 with four thousand five hundred men and eighteen guns. On the afternoon of the 5th, after a trying march of forty-one hours "in the worst of weather," he got sight of the Persian intrenchments, but found the enemy already flown into the recesses of the neighbouring hills. To follow them up into that rugged and barren country with a small force not too well supplied, was more than even the Bayard of India would dare. Replenishing his own stores out of the rich spoils which the Persians in their haste had left behind them, Outram on the evening of the 7th set his face towards Busháhr.

But his troops had not gone far when the enemy's horse began to worry their rear, erelong to threaten them on both flanks. Forming square around their baggage, and teased all night by the fire from four heavy guns, Outram's soldiers lay out in the cold and darkness, awaiting the slow approach of dawn. The first light of morning showed them a force of seven thousand men drawn up in fighting order on their left rear by the walled village of Khusháb. Outram was then lying faint, half stunned, and helpless from the fall of his charger during the night; but Stalker was equal to the occasion. At a word the cavalry and artillery swept forward, the infantry following in double line. While the gunners did their duty with a will, the Puna Horse and the 3rd Bombay Cavalry made two dashing charges into the thick of the Persian bayonets. The latter regiment crashed into a square of infantry, and riding through and through it left several hundred dead upon the spot. At that sight the enemy broke and fled, leaving behind them two guns with much ammunition, and owing their escape from sheer annihilation only to the scant numbers of the British horse. Our infantry never came within reach of the foe. Ten killed and sixty-two wounded made up the loss on Outram's side. Another long march through a country flooded with rain brought his tired soldiers back to Busháhr

During the rest of February no further move was . ade against

the enemy. Fresh troops, however, were forwarded from Bombay, and it soon became known in camp that an attack by land and water would ere long be made on Mohamra, a fortified town lying near the confluence of the Karún river with the Shat-ul-Arab or Lower Euphrates. Heavily armed batteries of solid earth twenty feet thick and eighteen high, with casemated embrasures, commanded the passage of the Shat-ul-Arab and barred the approach by water to Ispahán. The officers of a French frigate, the *Sibylle*, who had seen these works, declared that Outram could never take them with the means at his command. A Persian army thirteen thousand strong covered Mohamra and its defences. But Outram had already taken the measure of his enemy, and Havelock, eager to win fresh laurels, drew up a plan of action which his chief in the main adopted. The death of General Stalker, followed closely by that of Commodore Ethersey,* detained Outram longer than he liked at Busháhr. At last, on the 22nd of March, having left the brave Colonel John Jacob in command at Busháhr, Outram joined the fleet already assembled off the mouth of the Euphrates.†

Two days later the war steamers of the Indian Navy, commanded by Commodore Young, successor to the ill-starred Ethersey, passed up the Shat-ul-Arab towing the troopships, aboard which were stowed about four thousand nine hundred soldiers, including two regiments of horse and two batteries of artillery. For more than sixty miles the fleet steamed on without a check amidst frequent cheers from the Arabs who thronged the banks. On the evening of the 24th it cast anchor by the village of Harta, at the junction of the Shat-ul-Arab with the Karún, three miles below Mohamra itself, in view of the chain of solid well-armed earthworks that seemed to bar the way up either stream. That night and the following day were spent in careful reconnaissances and busy preparations for the attack. At daybreak of the 26th a mortar battery, which had been towed up by night to a point of vantage, opened a heavy fire on the enemy's works. At seven the men-of-war moved to take up their several places under a raking fire, which none of them for the moment returned. At length the word was given, and steamer after steamer hurled its shot and shell, without ceasing, into the foe. The Captain of the *Assaye* took his vessel within pistol-range of

* Both these victims of brain disease, developed by mental worries and overwork, died by their own hands within three days of each other.

† Trotter; Marshman's "Havelock."

the northern fort, emulous of the bold example set by his Commodore on board the *Feroze*. By ten o'clock the magazine in the north fort had blown up, and the Persian fire was already slackening. By noon the strongest batteries were all but struck dumb. The signal for the transports soon brought them up above the northern defences with the loss of hardly a man hit on their crowded decks.*

By half-past one the bulk of the troops were safely landed. While parties of seamen were engaged in storming the various batteries, Outram's infantry, led by Havelock and the 78th Highlanders, began their march through the date-groves towards the intrenched camp at Mohamra. But the enemy's camp, with the property left therein, was all of the enemy they were destined to see. A small scouting party of Sind Horse came up with the tail of Prince Khánla Mirza's flying warriors; but the bulk of our cavalry could not be landed in time to follow up the routed foe. It had proved in fact a sailors' victory, won by the skilful seamanship and resourceful courage of the officers and men of that Indian Navy whose exploits rank with the best of those achieved by the countrymen of Nelson and Cochrane fighting under the Royal flag.† And, compared with the heavy risks incurred by an attacking force of four steam-frigates, one steam-sloop, and two sailing-sloops, against massive earthworks armed with more than forty large guns, served by the best gunners whom Tehrán could furnish, besides scores of jingáls and thousands of matchlockmen, the victory was won at a cost surprisingly small—ten killed and thirty wounded. Many more would have fallen under the matchlock fire, but for an order issued at Rennie's prompting by Commodore Young, that every ship should have her bulwarks protected by trusses of compressed hay.‡ Among the spoils of war were seventeen guns; the rest having been either thrown into the river or carried off by the enemy.

Three days later, on the 29th, three small steamers and as many gunboats were taken up the Karún by Captain Rennie in chase of the flying Persians. On the morning of April 1st some

* Low; Marshman; Trotter.

† The mortar battery indeed belonged to the land force; but the raft that bore it, and the use made of it, were planned by Commander Rennie, Young's flag-capt.in—(Low).

‡ "The gentlemen in blue," wrote Havelock, "had it all to themselves, and left us nought to do"—(Low). Vast numbers of bullets were afterwards shaken out of the hay trusses.

7,000 of these were seen strongly posted on the right bank near Ahwáz. A few rounds from the gunboats sent the brave army once more flying, with swarms of plundering Arabs at their heels. After two days spent in destroying or carrying away the booty discovered at Ahwáz, the flotilla steamed down again to Mohamra. On the 5th of April, just as the troops at that place had formed up for church-parade, Outram rode up to Havelock and told him of the peace already in effect concluded between the belligerent powers. At Paris, on the 4th of March, the English and Persian Commissioners had signed an agreement which pledged the Shah to renounce all claims to sovereignty over Herát or any other Afghán province. Within three months after ratifying the treaty he was to withdraw his troops from the invaded country; the Queen and the Governor-General promising in like manner to withdraw theirs from Persian soil. In the event of any future quarrel with Herát or Afghánistán, the Shah bound himself to employ the good offices which England undertook to render in behalf of peace, before he resorted to acts of war. Mr. Murray was to be received with all honour on his return to the Persian capital; but thenceforth no Persian subjects were to enjoy the right of British protection, save the immediate servants of the embassy and the consulate. The treaty for suppressing the slave-trade in the Persian Gulf was to be prolonged for ten years after the expiry of its original term; and in all matters of trade or policy Great Britain was to stand thenceforward on an equal footing with the most favoured of her rivals.*

On the 2nd of May the treaty was finally ratified at Bághdád. Before the end of July the Shah's troops had marched out of Herát, the government of which devolved on Ahmad Khán, a nephew of the Afghán Amir. On Outram, Leeke, and all their brave followers of both services, the Governor-General bestowed the heartiest thanks of his Government for "the vigour, the enterprising spirit, and the intrepidity" which had marked the progress of a brief but very brilliant campaign. The names of Young, Rennie, Adams, and some other officers of the Indian Navy were honoured with a notice worthy of their deeds. The thanks of Parliament were followed up by the official distribution of rewards and honours among all concerned. But among those officers who remained undecorated was Commander Adams, who had been publicly thanked by his Commodore, by Outram, and by Lord Canning, for his daring attack upon the most

* Rawlinson; Trotter.

powerful of the Mohamra forts. Official routine denied the commander of the *Assaye* the lowest Order of the Bath, on the plea that his rank at the time—he was only a lieutenant—disqualified him for an honour reserved for officers of higher standing;* and still denied it even when a year later he too had reached that higher standing.

On the 9th of May Outram's Field Force was broken up; but a portion of the native troops remained until October at Bushahr. It was fortunate for our countrymen in India that the war had been thus early concluded, for events were already happening there which demanded the presence of every available English soldier on the scene of impending trouble. The new Commander-in-Chief, General Anson, had warned Havelock early in April of the growing disaffection among the Bengal Sepoys; and before the month's end Outram had received from Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, a pressing request to send back all his European troops without a moment's delay. How promptly the request was answered, and how urgent was becoming the need for fresh troops in India, the following chapters will serve to show.†

* The officer commanding the mortar raft, and Captain Arnold Kemball, the Political Agent, received the honours of C.B. as soon as they became brevet-majors in 1858; two days after Adams became a full commander—(Low). Felix Jones was also left undecorated.

† Marshman.

CHAPTER II.

THE GREASED CARTRIDGES.

THE military station of Dum-Dum, eight miles from Calcutta, had long been the head-quarters of the Bengal Artillery. After their removal up the country to Meerut, it became the seat of a School of Musketry for teaching the use of the new Enfield rifle, the accepted substitute for the old Brown Bess. The cartridges for these rifles were made up in the workshops of Dum-Dum. One day, in January 1857, a *lascar*, or native workman, asked a high-caste Sepoy of the 2nd Grenadiers for a drink of water from his *lotah*, the brass vessel which natives use alike for drinking and washing. The Sepoy, of course, refused to let a low-caste fellow drink out of his lotah; whereupon the lascar told him that all castes would soon be alike, "for you will all have to bite cartridges greased with the fat of pigs and cows." These words of ill-omen the Brahman carried back into the Sepoy lines. To him and his comrades their meaning was only too clear; the Christian Sahibs were plotting a deadly outrage on the faith alike of Mohammadans and Hindus, of those who abominated the flesh of swine, and those who hallowed the cow as sacred to their gods. On the 22nd January the officer in command of the Depôt learned that a very uneasy feeling about the new cartridges prevailed among the Sepoys quartered at Dum-Dum. A few days later General Hearsey, who commanded the Presidency Division, reported to the Adjutant-General's office that an ill-feeling was "said to subsist" in the minds of Sepoys at Barrackpore, the great military cantonment on the Húghli. Some designing persons had spread a report that the Sepoys were to be compelled to "embrace the Christian faith." By the beginning of February the startling rumour had reached the Sepoy lines at Barhampur, on the road from Plassy to Múrshidábád. "What is this story that every one is talking about," said a Brahman pay-sergeant to Colonel Mitchell, "that

Government intend to make the Native army use cow's fat and pig's fat with the ammunition for their new rifles?"*

Hearsey's letter bore some little fruit. By the end of January orders were issued allowing the Sepoys at the musketry-depôts to grease their own cartridges and to tear off the ends with their fingers instead of their teeth. But the mischief which the Government thus strove to repair had been done already. The lying rumour which had caught the inflammable minds of our native soldiery had grown out of a single grain of truth, wrapped up in something that looked like truth. Some of the cartridges at first issued to the new schools of musketry had really been greased with beef-fat.† It was a blunder committed in pure ignorance or stupid carelessness. But a blunder not unlike this had fifty years earlier provoked a furious mutiny in Southern India; and the secondary causes which played their part in the fierce but short-lived hurricane at Vellór were far less active and wide-working than those which fought against us in the great Sepoy revolt of 1857.

Some of those causes grew up as it were within the ranks of the Indian Army, while others acted upon it from without. For some years past the Sepoy had been gradually losing touch of his white officer. Changed habits, ideas, and circumstances were drawing these two further and further apart. A new generation of English subalterns had come to look upon regimental duty as a dull preface to an exciting tale, a kind of stepping-stone to the good things of Staff employ. The heart of the officer was no longer with his men, from whom a few months' study and a little interest at Headquarters might take him off into a wider and more attractive career. While a large proportion of the best officers in a native regiment were drawn away for service on the General Staff, others were spending half the year on leave in the Hill stations, or taking their turn of furlough for two or three years at home. It was commonly averred that our young ensigns and lieutenants knew, and cared to know, little of the grey subadárs whom the rules of the service placed under their command; still less of the privates whom each new Government order made them more and more powerless either to punish or to reward. Even the majors and colonels of native regiments had lost much of their old importance in Sepoy eyes, by the steady absorption of their former powers into the hands of the Adjutant-General and

* Kaye; Marshman.

† Sir Hope Grant's "Incidents of the Sepoy War"; Kaye.

the Commander-in-Chief. A marked change had also taken place in the social habits of our countrymen, who cared no longer to take their wives or their mistresses from the people among whom they dwelt. All this tended to weaken the ties of discipline, reverence, trustfulness, even affection, which had once bound the Sepoy to his regimental leaders.

Among a soldiery thus growing more and more estranged from their English masters, everything that seemed to touch their former privileges would serve to breed suspicion and inflame discontent. The pride of the high-caste Sepoys of Bengal had been sorely hurt by the admission of Sikhs and other low-caste men into their ranks; while their prescriptive rights were scattered to the winds by the new rule compelling all recruits to enlist for general service, whether by land or sea. If the men of the Bengal Army were henceforth to go anywhither, to do anything demanded of them, to work in the trenches for instance, like their comrades of Madras and Bombay, at what ancient right or long-cherished usage might not a crafty Government strike the next blow? Already were some of its officers playing the part of missionaries among their own men, preaching openly in the bazaars, and acting to all appearance as official mouthpieces of a Government resolved, by fair means or by foul, to sweep away all distinctions of caste and creed. And, to crown all, Oudh itself, which furnished 40,000 Sepoys to the Bengal Army, had now fallen under British rule; and the soldier-yeoman who had once been the pride and envy of his fellow-villagers, whose family had dwelt in safety and honour under the wing of the British Resident at Lucknow, found himself shorn of his old importance, by an event which raised his neighbours to his own level before the law.*

Outside the Sepoy Army of Bengal, other influences wrought to the same end. On the 23rd of June, 1857, a hundred years would have gone by since Clive won the fateful victory of Plassy; and an old prophecy was in all men's mouths that a hundred years after Plassy the Great Company's rule in India would come to an end. A fearful outbreak of cholera which ravaged the country from Agra up to Mianmir in 1856, followed by heavy and ruinous floods in Bengal and the Panjáb, gave new force and currency to a popular belief, based on the reckonings of Hindu astrologers.† While men's minds were thus prepared for some unusual catastrophe, the enemies of our rule had not been idle in disseminating

* Trotter; Kaye; Meadows-Taylor.

† The Hindu almanacs of this year foretold serious dangers to the ruling powers.

their own version of passing events. In the Imperial Palace at Delhi, in the Nána's castle of Bithúr, in the pleasant quarters occupied near Calcutta by the deposed King of Oudh, wherever people cherished a grudge against their rulers for some real or fancied wrong, plots were quietly brewing of which our own countrymen had small suspicion, or to which they gave no special heed. Emissaries from native courts roamed the country, inflaming the minds of the discontented, and spreading around them dark rumours, none the less potent for their real groundlessness, of a great English plot for abolishing caste and converting all India, by force or fraud, to its masters' creed. Any pretext served as a handle for the most ridiculous slanders against a Government guilty only of well-meant efforts to advance the general welfare, and to imbue its subjects with a taste for Western civilization.

And the time seemed propitious to our foes in India. Her English garrison had been weakened to furnish troops for the campaign against Russian foes in the Crimea; nor had their place been filled up by other troops from England, in spite of the demands of common prudence and of the warnings uttered by Dalhousie before and after the annexation of Oudh. Fresh regiments had been shipped off from India for the Persian War. It was given out by the Nána's emissaries that our army in the Crimea had perished to a man, and that England needed every soldier she could muster for her own defence, let alone the fresh embarrassments caused by an impending war with China, in which troops from India and the Eastern Seas were even then preparing to take a part. Only one English regiment lay at this time between Calcutta and Agra, a distance little short of eight hundred miles; while all India was held by little more than thirty thousand English soldiers, more than half of whom were quartered in, or near, the Panjáb. Less than five thousand British troops kept watch over the broad provinces stretching from the Satlaj to the Bay of Bengal. Delhi itself, with its well-stocked arsenal, its palace full of intrigues, and its crowds of turbulent citizens, lay guarded by Sepoy regiments, forty miles away from the nearest British garrison at Meerut.* Well might the overgrown Sepoy Army of Bengal be tempted on fit occasion to measure its own strength against that of a rival so weak in numbers, so low, as it then seemed, in military repute.

Before the end of January the story of the cartridges had taken such hold of the four native regiments at Barrackpore, that their

* Kaye; Trotter; Marshman; M. Taylor.

discontent began to show itself in nocturnal meetings, in bungalows mysteriously set on fire, in a demeanour growing more and more insolent towards their officers.* About the same time fires began to desolate the cantonment of Rániganj, on the East Indian Railway, garrisoned by a wing of one of the regiments quartered at Barrackpore. In February the disaffection spread to Bahrampur, where a company of the 34th Sepoys, another of the Barrackpore regiments, had just arrived. On the 26th of that month the men of the 19th Native Infantry refused the percussion caps served out to them for the next morning's parade. Their dread of being beguiled into using the offensive cartridges had driven them thus far on the road to open mutiny.

Hurrying off to the Sepoy lines, Colonel Mitchell assured his native officers that the cartridges set aside for the morrow had all been made up a year ago by the last regiment there quartered. Whoever refused to take them would be severely punished. Before going to bed he sent out an order that the cavalry and artillery of Bahrampur should attend the next morning's parade. But his slumbers were soon broken by an uproar in the native lines. Their passions inflamed by the story of Mitchell's address to the native officers, and their fears aroused by rumours of coming danger to themselves, the Sepoys had rushed to the bells of arms, seized their muskets, and startled up the whole neighbourhood with the din of loud voices and beaten drums, mingling anon with the wild alarm-notes of the bugles. As the English officers hurried down to the lines, their men with muskets loaded warned them loudly to keep off. Presently the rattle of guns and the tramp of cavalry brought timely answer to Mitchell's hurried summons, causing the mutineers to shout more tremulously, to clutch their muskets less resolutely than they had done a moment before. While the guns were loading and the troopers forming line, Mitchell called his native officers around him, and bade them order the mutineers to lay down their arms. This, after some further parleying, the men agreed to do. As soon as they began to lodge arms, the remaining troops were marched off the ground.

The mutineers returned to their duty, to a show of their former discipline. But the overt mutiny could not be forgiven. Their doom was only delayed until a swift steamer should have brought the 84th Foot round to Calcutta from Rangoon. By March 20 the succour so urgently needed by a Government which

* The first house burnt down was the telegraph-office.

had but one British regiment stationed anywhere below Dánápur had reached its new goal. The last day of that month saw the doomed Sepoys of the 19th drawn up on the Barrackpore parade ground, flanked on one side by the four regiments of that station, on the other by two troops of horse-artillery, and a regiment and a half of British foot. Amidst deep silence, General Hearsey read out the order in which Lord Canning had decreed the disbanding of the 19th Native Infantry for the guilt of "open and defiant mutiny." In spite of their subsequent offer to serve the Government anywhere in the field, the mutineers had expressed no contrition for offences not to be excused by any plea of fear for their religion or their lives. A Government always scrupulously tender to the religious feelings of its subjects, demanded in return their thorough confidence, insisted on unfaltering obedience from all its soldiers, and never would listen to complaints preferred by men with arms in their hands. For these reasons, and because no further trust could be placed in a regiment which had so disgraced itself, the Governor-General in Council had resolved that all the native officers and privates of the 19th should be discharged from the Bengal Army in the presence of "every available corps within two days' march of the Presidency Headquarters."

After the reading of this order, the doomed regiment, no longer mutinous, but only sorrowful and penitent too late, piled their arms, took off their accoutrements, and brought their colours to the front. One disgrace was mercifully spared them: they were allowed to keep their uniforms. In return, moreover, for their good conduct after the outbreak, Hearsey promised to forward them all at the public cost to their several homes. With a wail of self-pitying remorse, with cries of vengeance on their traitorous comrades of the 34th, the disbanded Sepoys took their pay and marched off under escort to Chinsura, cheering as they went the brave old general, who had meanwhile been doing his best to convince the remaining regiments of their folly in listening to idle tales.*

It had been for Hearsey an anxious moment when the native troops formed up to hear the sentence passed by Government on their offending comrades. He and his officers had good cause for anxiety. Only two days back, on March 29, Mangal Pándi, a young Hindu Sepoy of the 34th, drunk with *bhang*† and lying stories, seized his musket, rushed out of his hut, and strode up and down before the regimental quarter-guard, calling on his com-

* Kaye; Trotter. † A narcotic made from hemp.

rades to rally round him in defence of their religion. In sight of the whole guard, not one of whom stirred a finger or a foot to check him, he took aim at the white sergeant-major, whom the noise had brought up to the spot. The weapon luckily missed fire. At that moment Lieutenant Baugh, the Adjutant, came galloping up the lines. Again the drunken fanatic levelled his piece. The ball missed the adjutant, but brought him with his wounded charger to the ground. Springing to his feet, Baugh fired his pistol, but in vain. A free fight with swords then took place between the Sepoy and the two Englishmen, within a few paces of the quarter-guard, where stood the Jamadár, or native officer, with twenty of his men. One only of these, Shaikh Phaltú, a Musalman, bore himself like a true soldier. While the Englishmen were bleeding fast under the sharp strokes of their opponent's *talwár*, he rushed forward, pinned the Sepoy by both arms, and, in spite of his fierce strength and the threats of his comrades, held him fast until the wounded men could escape from further violence, from the blows and insults of the very Sepoys on guard.

Mangal Pándi at length broke loose, and marching wildly to and fro, again called on his comrades, by this time numerous, to aid him in defence of their religion. Meanwhile, other officers were hastening up to the scene of disturbance; among them the veteran Hearsey, whose native courage still burned as steadily as it had done nearly forty years back in the memorable fight of Sítabaldi. Riding forward with his two sons, and sternly ordering the guard to follow him, he soon came within perilous reach of the madman's uplifted musket. In another moment he might have paid the penalty of his noble rashness. "If I fall"—he said to his son John—"rush upon him and kill him." But in the very act of firing, the Sepoy, with a sudden change of purpose, turned his weapon against himself. Falling to the ground, not slain, but only wounded, he was carried off to the hospital. Then, with a parting speech, half scornful, half remonstrant, the dauntless veteran rode home again.*

The wounded young savage lived to undergo hanging ten days afterwards. The Jamadár, who had let his adjutant be cut down before his own eyes, was tried by a court of native officers, and sentenced to the same dog's death. It was not, however, till April 22 that he too underwent his doom; an avowal of its justice being the last words that left his lips. Still longer delayed, for somewhat better reasons, was the punishment of others guilty in

* Kaye; Trotter.

a little less degree of the same crime.* Not till May 6 did seven companies of the 34th Native Infantry—for the other three were doing their duty loyally at Chittagong—assemble on the Barrackpore parade ground to reap the full measure of that disgrace which had been dealt out more sparingly to the mutineers of Bahrampur.

Before that time events had been happening in many places which ought, one imagines, to have opened the eyes of our countrymen in India to the extent of a danger as yet hardly visible even to a few. On the 10th of March two Sepoys of the 2nd Grenadiers—another of the Barrackpore regiments—were arrested in Calcutta by a native officer on guard at the Mint, for having tried to draw him into a plot which would have placed Fort William in the hands of the Barrackpore mutineers. A Jamadár of the same regiment was caught in the act of tampering with some loyal Sepoys of the 70th Native Infantry. Several Englishmen in various parts of the country had already been warned by their native friends to send their wives and children away betimes to England, even if they themselves must stay behind. Early in March the Governor of Bombay, Lord Elphinstone, received an anonymous letter written in Maráthi, warning him of treasons brewing, and setting forth a number of grievances which called for timely redress. About the same time Mr. Colvin, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, was privately informed by letter that the King of Delhi was busily intriguing with the Shah of Persia for the re-establishment of Moghal rule over Hindustan. In the middle of the same month there was found posted on the gateway of the Jamma Masjid, or Great Mosque of Delhi, a proclamation which declared that a Persian army was coming to rescue India from the Farangi yoke, and invited all true followers of the Prophet to gird up their loins and fight till death against the Infidel. It was known that one of the Delhi princes had lately travelled into Southern India as far at least as Haidarabád, and that several princes and nobles, Hindu as well as Mohammadan, had made up by the warmth of their welcome for his cold reception at the Nizam's Court. It was even rumoured in Delhi—and the rumour seems to have been far from groundless—that the old King of Delhi had baited his overtures to the Shah of Persia and the ex-King of Oudh by a promise to exchange the Sunni for the Shiah form of their common religion.†

* Legal hairsplitting delayed the hanging of the Jamadár. Lord Canning's thirst for information delayed the disbanding of the 34th N.I.

† Kaye; Meadows-Taylor.

Such things, however, were of little moment compared with the tokens of a rebellious spirit rife among the Sepoys of the Bengal Army. In the great northern cantonment of Ambála, where the cold-weather parades were hardly yet over, General Anson found that, do what he might to allay the fears of the Sepoys touching the new cartridges, none but the few who were learning the new rifle-drill in the School of Musketry could be got to clear their minds of an obstinate belief in the bad faith and the crafty purposes of the Indian Government. If the cartridges were no longer smeared with the defiling fat, the paper of which they were made seemed, to their angry fancy, to contain the old pollution under a new guise. They were as madmen with a fixed idea which no amount of reasoning, no kind of demonstration, could now efface. Instead of putting off the new drill on this or that pretext, as Anson himself suggested, Lord Canning stood upon the high ground of official dignity and abstract principle, and resolved that the drill should go on. Had not order after order been published, revealing the true state of things, and therefore removing from the Sepoy mind the last excuse for disaffection? With a hundred thousand, or even fifty thousand, English soldiers at his back, the Governor-General's reasoning would have been sound enough. As things stood, it betrayed that want of ready insight, of pliant statesmanship, which marred not a few passages of his Indian career. The drills went on; the men of the musketry school handled their cartridges without a murmur, and greased them with a mixture of their own making. But the rest of the Ambála Sepoys followed them with jeers, set fire to their huts —a measure which the sufferers repaid with interest—and began at last to fire the European barracks, with other public buildings scattered about the lines. Night after night the wide station was ablaze with fires whose origin, however easy to guess at, could never in any instance be clearly traced.*

All through April these fires kept baffling official watchfulness, and belying the confidence still generally felt or feigned in the speedy quenching of the disaffection thus strangely symptomed. In Meerut, the great military capital of Upper India, men's minds grew more and more disquieted with all kinds of startling rumours spread about by emissaries of evil disguised as fakeers. No tale was too wild for the credulous hunger of people already prone by nature and untoward circumstances to believe anything told about the Farangi. Combining the ready faith of children

* Kaye; Trotter.

with the passions of Eastern men, the resentful Sepoys were easily led to believe that defiling matter had been thrown into the wells, that animal fat had been boiled up with the *ghee* or liquid butter sold in the bazaars, and that ground bones had been mixed up with the cheap flour of which Meerut traders were buying largely to sell to the regiments at Cawnpore. From station to station these stories were passed on. In Cawnpore nobody would touch the cheaper food;* in places hundreds of miles away the natives began to look disgustfully at everything offered them in the shape of flour. As if to prepare men's minds for some unwonted catastrophe, messengers had for many weeks past been employed in bearing from village to village, from Oudh to Barrackpore and up into the heart of the Panjáb, a strange, harmless-looking token, whose real meaning was but dimly understood by those that handed it on. It was only a *Chapáthi*, a flat cake of unleavened meal, such as forms the staple food of the people in those provinces. But the fiery cross of Scotch history had no surer power for mischief on the minds of obedient clansmen, than this quiet signal had on large numbers of peaceful-seeming natives throughout Hindustan. Ignorant as they mostly were of the plots actually brewing, the village officers passed on the mysterious token without a question, like men bound by some old yet ever-hallowed custom to do the least bidding of their unknown lord and master.†

While the little cloud was thus glooming over the whole sky, Lord Canning and his counsellors were slow to take in the true significance of all they saw and heard. Hearsey had told them how at Barrackpore he was living on a mine which might explode at any moment. They knew that our Sepoys were always prone to wax mutinous on points concerning their pay or their religion. They knew that India contained many centres of disaffection, that plots were always brewing against us in this or the other Native Court, in every place where any powerful class of natives felt aggrieved by the policy, real or fancied, of the Indian Government. But being Englishmen, and judging all things from an English standpoint, they could not bring themselves to believe in aught more serious than a passing fever-fit of unreasoning anger and alarm, born of a misunderstanding the cause of which they had

* The story of the bone-dust was probably a trick of the Cawnpore traders to keep up the price of flour. But it was soon turned to more dangerous uses.

† Kaye; Trotter; Edwardes's "Personal Adventures"; Hutchinson's "Mutinies in Oudh."

already removed, so far as explanatory orders and soothing proclamations could remove it. From the various stations in the Panjáb no signs of Sepoy disaffection had yet been reported. At Siálkhot, the training-ground for the School of Musketry in that province, Sir John Lawrence found the Sepoys "highly pleased with the new musket, and quite ready to adopt" a weapon that would prove so useful to them in mountain warfare.* No murmurs were as yet audible in the native armies of Madras and Bombay. Of all the leading native princes and nobles not one had given any cause for suspicion. Even in the worst behaved of the Bengal regiments the Mohammadan Sepoys were still credited with being true to their salt. Of the officers in command of native corps nine out of ten would have staked their lives upon the loyalty of their own men. Few in short of our countrymen in India, official or other, could so bridge over the gulf that parted them from their dark-skinned neighbours, as rightly to forecast the issues of a movement the like of which no living Englishman had ever seen. Even those who trusted to their own wiser instincts, or gave due heed to the warnings of their native friends, found small encouragement to speak out. If any one did venture to speak out, he was called a croaker for his pains.

Whatever our countrymen hoped or feared, the storm-clouds were gathering fast around them. On the 24th of April the skirmishers of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry were paraded at Meerut to practise the new method of pinching instead of biting off the ends of their cartridges. Out of ninety troopers five only would obey their officers, although the cartridges were of the same pattern as those which they had handled many a time before. A court-martial sat next day upon the offenders, most of whom were Mohammadans. It was clear at last that the old antagonism of Hindu and Mohammadan had been replaced by an ominous concert for some baneful end. While the court was yet sitting, the 48th Bengal Infantry at Lucknow displayed a demeanour so insolent that Sir Henry Lawrence felt sorely tempted to order it away from Oudh. On the 2nd of May Sir Henry heard that the 7th Oudh Irregulars, one of the late King's regiments, would touch no more of the very cartridges which for the past fortnight they had been quietly using. Next day the sullen disobedience blazed into open mutiny; many of the Sepoys talked of killing their white officers. Things looked serious. The scene of mutiny was seven miles out of Lucknow, and among all his garrison the Chief

* Kaye.

Commissioner could set full trust only in a few hundred British infantry and a few score gunners. But no time was lost in thinking what to do. Before sunset a strong force, including the doubtful 48th, marched through the city, and came by moonlight on the mutineers, who, drawn up on their own parade-ground, under their own officers, asked each other in anxious whispers what was to happen next.

At sight of the approaching troops, of the gunners standing with lighted portfires beside their guns, more than half the guilty regiment threw down their arms and fled. The remainder were compelled to give up their arms, strip off their accoutrements, and march back strongly guarded to Lucknow, while the cavalry rode off in hot pursuit of their flying comrades. Erelong fifty of the ringleaders were in close confinement, awaiting the sentence of a military court. In vain was a board of officers enjoined to search out the hidden causes of all this mutinous feeling; not a Sepoy could be got to open his mouth freely on a matter which lay next the hearts of a whole army. Little more was ascertained than the fact of treasonable letters exchanged for some time past between the 7th Irregulars and the 48th Native Infantry.*

Lawrence himself spared no pains to probe the causes and to suggest the likeliest remedies for the prevailing discontent. He talked and reasoned quietly with native soldiers of all ranks. But no reasoning would win them over from their deep-seated belief in the fixed intention of their English masters to make all their servants of one caste and creed. "You want us all to eat what you like that we may be the stronger and go everywhere," said a Jamadár of twenty years' service with whom Lawrence had been talking for a whole hour. The same officer insisted that the Government had been trying for ten years past to convert all the Natives to their own faith, and he believed them quite capable of mixing bone-dust with flour for that end. No assurances, even from the most widely trusted of Anglo-Indian statesmen, could overcome the fears of a panic-stricken soldiery, or stay their hands from firing, one night an officer's bungalow, the next a row of Sepoys' huts. Day by day in Oudh, as elsewhere, the signs of a disaffection inflamed by the return home of so many Sepoys from the disbanded regiments, grew more alarming, until the heart of the Chief Commissioner became haunted with too prophetic fears.†

Among the leading plotters against our rule few, if any of our

* Kaye; Merivale; Trotter. † Merivale; Kaye.

countrymen thought of reckoning the Nána of Bithúr. Suspicion might bend its gaze on the Palace at Delhi, on the villas of Garden Reach, on this or that other centre of possible intrigue or probable disaffection. But no one cared to ask what motives the adopted son of Báji Ráo might have for plotting vengeance on the alleged despoilers of his inheritance. Not a word of misgiving was breathed against the quiet gentleman whose palace had sometimes opened its gates to English visitors from Cawnpore. And yet the harmless-seeming Rajah of Bithúr had long been engaged in fashioning the framework of a wide conspiracy against his unconscious foes. While his Musalman agent, Azimulla Khán, was still in Europe receiving love-letters from English ladies, or jesting in the camp before Sebastopol over the superior prowess of Russian arms, another agent was pushing his master's cause among the Maráthas of Southern and Central India. With the dispossessed lords of Nágpur and Satára, with the wily Rajah of Kashmir, with the princes of Delhi, with the discrowned sovereign and disaffected barons of Oudh, with many a secret mouthpiece of Mohammadan and Hindu discontent, did the revengeful Marátha Brahman correspond for months, in some cases for years, before the final outbreak of 1857. The awkward incident of the greased cartridges came upon him like a heaven-sent assurance of the prize which cunning astrologers had dangled a few years back before the eyes of a plotter at once revengeful, superstitious, and greedy of power. A great Sepoy mutiny was the very card for his playing at a moment when England, coming weak and crippled, as his agents told him, out of the Russian War, could not keep her Indian garrison up even to the strength of the years preceding our conquest of Pegu.*

To spread the flame of the Barrackpore mutiny the Nána and his chief agent Azimulla Khán went about on plea of business or religion from one cantonment to another in the North-West. Kalpi, Delhi and Ambála were visited in turn by one or both of the travellers. In the latter part of April the fellow-plotters reached Lucknow, where they bore themselves with a cool insolence which Mr. Gubbins for one could not help remarking. Their sudden departure for Cawnpore sharpened Gubbins's vague dislike into a shrewd suspicion, presently shared by Sir Henry Lawrence. A letter of warning speedily reached Sir Hugh Wheeler, who commanded the Cawnpore Division. But the honest old warrior of fifty-two years' service would listen to no surmises

* Kaye; Trotter; Russell's "Indian Diary."

uttered from Lucknow against a gentleman for whose loyalty the English at Cawnpore were still ready to vouch.*

While Lord Canning and his Council were yet debating the best mode of punishing the Oudh mutineers, events at Meerut were hurrying onward to that final outburst whose echoes were to awake a sudden horror in thousands of far-off English homes. On the 9th of May the sentences awarded to the mutineers of the 3rd Cavalry were read out to the regiment on parade; and the guilty men were marched off to undergo their several terms of imprisonment and hard labour in the public jail. Next evening, while most of our countrymen were on their way to church, the rabble of the native town, armed with swords, spears, and clubs, swarmed through every lane and alley and blocked the outlets from the bazaars.† The troopers of the 3rd Cavalry seized their arms, mounted their horses, and galloped off to the jail, where many hundred convicts lay guarded by a few score policemen and Sepoys. To tear the gratings down from the windows of the ward which held their own comrades and to bring the latter off, unshackled and unhindered, to their own lines, was the work of not many minutes. Meanwhile the Sepoys of the 11th and 20th Infantry, wild with fear and religious frenzy, gathered in armed bodies before their lines with much shouting and firing of muskets, and shot down Colonel Finnis with several other officers who had hastened up to learn the meaning of all that noise.

Erelong, on that sultry Sunday evening, the greater part of that large civil and military station seemed given over to a carnival of disorder, rioting and bloodshed. The insurgents from the city and the cantonments emptied the jails of their thousand prisoners. Men and women of English blood were shot as they drove homewards along the shady roads. Soon after sunset every bungalow in the Native lines was in flames; every "compound" or garden swarmed with ruffians bent on plunder or deeds of wanton violence. Hardly a white man, woman, or child, who came across them, escaped with a whole skin.

On that woful night all who could of the English made their way, some painfully as hunted game, to the safer precincts of the European lines. Of the remainder, some never came forth alive from their burning homes, while others fell by the way under the swords or bullets of their pitiless pursuers. The moon rose that

* Gubbins; Kaye; Keene's "Fifty-Seven."

† "Bazár in India means the tradesmen's quarters, the streets of shops."

night on scenes of horror which none who beheld them could forget. Everywhere a crackle of blazing bungalows, the yells of plunder-laden savages, the shrieks, groans, wailings of suffering fugitives, mingled anon with the hurried tramp of armed men, the clattering of cavalry, the rattle of musketry, and the loud quick rush of grapeshot, to form a fitting prelude to the darker tragedies that were soon to be enacted elsewhere.*

Before our gunners had opened fire on the mutineers, half of one of the finest stations in all India was in flames. It was nearly two hours since the first outbreak, before the 6th Carabineers, the 60th Rifles, and a few troops of horse-artillery came near the scene of raging devilry. Even then the prompt action of a Gillespie, of him who, fifty years earlier, had galloped forth from Arkot with a squadron of horse and a few light guns to stamp out the mutiny raging at Vellór, could have forestalled the yet worse disasters of the morrow. But no Gillespie commanded at Meerut; only General Hewitt, an artillery officer whose native vigour had long since yielded to the weight of years and continuous service under an Indian sun. Colonel Archdale Wilson, the artillery officer who commanded the Meerut Brigade, was younger, far more active, and more alive to the need for prompt action. He lost no time in placing guards over the Collector's Treasury, and about the European lines. But his orders for an immediate muster of the British troops seem to have partially miscarried in the execution. The Rifles and the guns were soon ready for their work; and the dragoons, a young regiment fresh from England, half-drilled and very short of horses, lost no time in answering the summons. But an order from Hewitt turned them off in a different direction towards the jail, and afterwards in the growing darkness they lost their way. After wandering with his guns and infantry about the deserted Sepoy lines, and firing a few rounds into a wood full of mutineers, Wilson called a halt and, with Hewitt's consent, marched his troops, now strengthened by the Carabineers, back to the northern or European side of the cantonments. Past lines of blazing bungalows under the risen moon, the troops came at last on the broad plain in front of their own barracks. There they halted, and General Hewitt lay down for a bivouac among his soldiers, while the insurgents were marching off full speed along the road to Delhi.†

When the tale of that night's doings was first noised abroad, few Englishmen could bring themselves to believe that three native

* Kaye; Trotter. † Ibid.

regiments, guilty of mutiny in its blackest form, had been allowed thus to cheat the vengeance, to baffle the pursuit of nearly two thousand good English soldiers, and to take their way unchecked to a great walled city forty miles off, full of Mohammadans and guarded only by Sepoys. If such things could happen at Meerut, what hope was there for other places less strongly guarded by men of our own race? Hewitt of course was loudly blamed for a miscarriage due in great measure to Wilson himself, who thought only of defending what was left of Meerut Station against an enemy by that time gone elsewhither. On Wilson's advice it was that Hewitt acted in withdrawing the troops to their own lines. By thus acting, the General made himself answerable for the mistake committed by his Brigadier; a mistake which seems the less excusable, if it be true that one officer of the Carabineers, Captain Rosser, had offered to lead a squadron of his dragoons and a troop of horse-artillery in chase of the enemy along the Delhi road.* Be that as it may, however, it must always appear strange that neither Hewitt nor Wilson should have looked towards Delhi as the goal which the mutineers were likely to aim at.

Even on the morrow, when it seemed no longer doubtful that the mutineers had gone off westward, no steps of any sort were taken to follow them up. Wilson's troops went out indeed for a formal reconnaissance "on the right of the Delhi road," but not a soldier was despatched to the great centre of political intrigue and ferment on the Jamna, where many of our countrymen were doomed that very day to look out in vain for the help that ought to have come from Meerut. A strange paralysis seems to have fallen upon the military and civil powers. Even on the scene of last night's devilry no serious attempt was made to track out and punish the ruffian rabble of the bazaars, the jails, and the neighbouring villages, by whom the work of plunder, havoc, and butchery had for the most part been carried on.

The bodies of the murdered men, women, and children were gathered up and laid out before burial in the theatre, where a mimic tragedy would have been presented that very evening but for the real tragedies of the past night. Many more would have been numbered with the dead, if all the Sepoys had turned upon their officers, or if every native servant had cared only to save himself. Happily not a few of both classes proved nobly faithful

* Such was Captain Rosser's own story as afterwards told to Mr. C. Raikes. But neither Wilson nor Colonel Custance, who commanded the Carabineers, remembered anything of such a proposal being made—(Kaye).

to their trust. Some of Captain Craigie's troopers saved his wife from slaughter at the risk of their own lives, while others bore Craigie himself and his brave subaltern unharmed through all the adventures of that woful night. The lives of the Commissioner, Harvey Greathed, his wife, and several other women, were saved by the courage of one faithful servant, who lured the insurgents off on a false scent from his master's bungalow, and thus gave Greathed's party time to escape unnoticed from a house already in flames.* A faithful *ayah* caught up and carried away the two children of an officer of the 20th Native Infantry, who with his wife had just been foully murdered. An officer of the 11th Native Infantry was impelled by his havildar-major to mount his horse and fly. Several officers owed their lives to Sepoys who shrank from adding murder to the crime of mutiny. Not a hand was lifted even by the worst of the mutineers against the chaplain of the station, as he drove back from church to the European lines. The Sepoy guard at the Treasury stood loyally to their post until a company of Rifles came to relieve them of their perilous task. Two Sepoys escorted a party of helpless women and children to the Dragoon Barracks, and a Mohammadan in the city, at no small risk to himself, gave shelter to two Christian families for whom no way of escape had else been open †

Early on the morning of the 11th of May some troopers of the 3rd Cavalry crossed the Jamna by a bridge of boats, slaying the toll-keeper and firing the toll-house on their way towards the Palace of Delhi. Refused admission at one gate of the city, they found easy passage through another. Their presence and the news they brought of a successful rising at Meerut, of the speedy approach of their fellow-mutineers, at once gave the signal for an outbreak yet more disastrous than that of the night before. There were many Europeans of pure or mixed blood inside the city, officers, magistrates, clergymen, journalists, bankers, tradesmen, clerks; but not even a company of English soldiers to guard the magazine. None of our countrymen knew clearly what had happened at Meerut, for the telegraph wires had been cut by the rebels on the Sunday evening. It was just the season when hot winds from the western deserts blew their keenest over the brown cracked plains, and English ladies shut out the heat from their

* Saiyid Mir Khán, a pensioned Afghán chief, was the first to warn Greathed of coming danger, from which Gulab Singh, his faithful Jamadár, finally rescued him—(Kaye).

† Kaye; Chambers's "History of the Indian Revolt."

darkened rooms with the aid of well-watered "tatties" made of a fragrant grass, through which the fierce outer air blows comparatively cool.

In little more than an hour the evil passions of a great city were raging in full flood over every barrier which had hitherto stood between them and the British rule. A murderous rabble of citizens and soldiers was eagerly hunting to death every man, woman, and child of European parentage or of the Christian faith. Band after band of mutineers from Meerut poured into the city, their numbers swollen by the Sepoy guards on duty within the walls. Inside the castled palace of the old pensioner-king himself had the work of butchery begun with the murder of the Commissioner, Simon Fraser, swiftly followed by that of Hutchinson, the Collector of Delhi, and of Captain Douglas, commanding the Palace-guard. Among the next victims fell Mr. Jennings, the resident chaplain, and his amiable daughter. By noon the Delhi Bank, facing the broad Chandni Chauk, or Street of Silversmiths, was a silent ruin, tenanted only by the corpses of Christian men and women, including the manager, Mr. Beresford, and his brave wife, who had fallen fighting for their lives against hopeless odds. A like fate befell many of the people employed in the offices of the *Delhi Gazette*. The building itself was gutted, and the types which had just been used to announce the impending danger were carried off for conversion into hostile bullets.*

While the ruffians of the city plundered and destroyed the dwellings of the slain or fugitive Farangi, fresh blood was shedding elsewhere. The men of the 54th Native Infantry, who had been sent from the cantonments outside to the Kashmir Gate of the city, turned upon their own officers and shot them down.† A little later their base example was followed by the Sepoys of the 74th, who had made at first some show of holding the Main Guard against all assailants. Nor did the Sepoys of the 38th, the regiment which a few years before had refused to cross the Bay of Bengal from Calcutta to Rangoon, lag behind their comrades in deeds of cruel treachery. Before sunset the whole city had fallen into the hands of mutineers and mobs of ruffians; the few English who had escaped outside the walls were fain at last to flee as they best could away from the blazing cantonments into a

* Kaye.

† Poor Colonel Ripley was bayonetted as he lay on the ground by some of his own Sepoys.

country bristling with every danger, through villages peopled by robber tribes, by Mohammadan zealots, or by Hindus who feared to show much active sympathy with the distressed and powerless Sahibs.*

Not without many deeds of heroic daring, endurance, self-sacrifice, did the old Moghal capital pass for a time into the keeping of blood-stained mutineers. The record of one great struggle in particular, maintained, for a time, by nine Englishmen against awful odds, must always find a place in any history of the great Sepoy revolt. While the main body of the Meerut Sepoys were yet marching towards Delhi, Lieutenant Willoughby, with two other officers and six sergeants of the Ordnance service, found time to close the gates of the great magazine near the Palace. A few light guns double-loaded with grape were planted about the defences; arms were served out among the still faithful gun-lascars; and a train of powder was laid down from the magazine itself to a spot some way off, as a last desperate remedy for a not unlikely strait. In a very short time the courage of that small band was tried to the utmost. A swarm of insurgents, in the name of the King of Delhi, called on Willoughby to surrender; but in vain. Scaling-ladders brought from the Palace were planted against the walls of his doomed stronghold. Deserted in a moment by their native followers, the nine Englishmen stood alone to their guns. If only a few of Hewitt's soldiers could come betimes to their succour, the chief arsenal in Upper India might yet be saved. Shower after shower of grape swept the assailants down as fast as they showed themselves upon the wall. But the unequal struggle could not last much longer. Two of the heroic nine were wounded, and the ammunition within reach was running short. Despairing of help from Meerut, Willoughby gave the preconcerted signal. Conductor Scully fired the train; and amidst the din and dust of an explosion which slew hundreds of the enemy, four or five of that noble little garrison made good their escape, all more or less bruised and wounded, by the sally-port opening on the river. Scully himself and three of his comrades were no more seen; and Willoughby, all scorched and crippled, afterwards reached Meerut only to die.†

The damaging effects of that explosion fell short of the hopes conceived by its projectors. Only a small part of the contents of an arsenal, which should never have been exposed to such a peril, had been rendered useless to its captors. But the gallantry of

* Kaye; Trotter. † Ibid.

the heroic nine won its due meed of national applause at home, and of public thanks from the Government of India; and rewards of a more solid kind were afterwards bestowed on the survivors, or in the shape of pensions on the families of those who fell.*

By this time, about four o'clock, the fierce May sun glared down upon a city lost beyond hope to its late masters. Of the three regiments who that morning had been sent forth from cantonments to quell the incipient rising only a few men, from loyalty or compassion, now stood beside their officers, urging them to flee at once from a doom which momently drew nearer and waxed more certain. Many an officer had already fallen under the bullets or the bayonets of his own men; and now the last of them were helping a few women to drop from the city walls into the ditch below and to scramble up the opposite slope, beyond which lay their only chance of safety. Erelong not a Christian was left alive within the circuit of those redstone walls, except a few poor hiding creatures who only for a short time succeeded in deferring their fate. A little later, and the last place of refuge outside the city, the one island still left to the hunted English amidst the rising flood of rebellion, became itself the seat of a new peril. At the Flagstaff Tower, a round brick building of some strength on the low rugged heights that sweep rampart-like a mile or more beyond the northern wall of Delhi, were huddled together all who had managed to obey the Brigadier's hurried summons to rally round him there, as well as many of those who escaped with their lives from the blood-reeking city. From this spot the crowd of fugitive men, women, and children, could follow with eager eyes and ears the course of surrounding events, could learn too soon from fresh comers the gradual defection of their own troops, could listen with renewed hope to the sounds of sharp fighting at the magazine, with a hope that died out as the smoke and thunder of the great explosion attested the failure of Willoughby's heroic defence.

Then, indeed, it began to grow clear that for the surviving English there would soon remain no choice save flight from a cruel death. After hours of anxious waiting in that overcrowded place of shelter for the help that never came from Meerut, they realized the need of shifting betimes for themselves. A company of the 38th, which had hitherto made a show of guarding the

* The names of the nine heroes were Willoughby, Rayner, Forrest, lieutenants; Shaw, Buckley, Scully, conductors; Edwards and Stewart, sergeants of the Ordnance Department.

tower, now followed the example of their comrades and carried off two guns which had been sent to aid the garrison in their defence. Further delay seemed worse than useless: already, indeed, the party under Brigadier Graves at the Flagstaff Tower had staid too long. Fresh from the work of murder and pillage within the city, bands of mutineers and ruffians were streaming forth to resume their feast of cruelty in the cantonments. There was no time to lose when the smoke of burning bungalows began to fill the evening air. On foot, on horseback, in buggies and other vehicles, many with weapons hastily caught up, a few with such small treasures as might at a moment's warning be got together, the remnant of the English hurriedly took their way from the spot which, a few weeks later, was to become the rallying point of an army eager to wipe out the memories of that dismal 11th May.*

What they suffered in their perilous journey through a land given over to utter lawlessness; how through pain and fasting, through weariness, sorrow, dangers unspeakable, and hardship in a hundred forms, these hapless wayfarers, some sick or wounded men, others tenderly-nurtured women with children by their side, with babes in their arms, struggled forward in scattered parties to their several goals, cannot in these pages be minutely recorded. The sad story has been told in full by some of those who survived the sharp trials they had to encounter. A happy few reached Meerut the next evening; some others made their way riding or driving through many dangers, but without much hindrance, to the more distant stations of Karnál and Ambála. But many more had to face an ordeal sharper to some than any death; had to wander for days and even weeks with their lives ever in their hands, while the hot winds of May breathed about them like a vast furnace, and the fierce May sun beat pitilessly down upon heads sometimes bare, upon bodies gradually stripped naked by bands of Gujars, a race of born thieves and freebooters who, dwelling about the Delhi district, found themselves suddenly free from the strong curb of British rule. Now hiding from their enemies in mean huts, or cowsheds, or lonely thickets, now trudging painfully all day over miles of sandy loam, crossed by streams not always easy to wade through, avoiding one village as full of Mohammadans, repelled from another by the fears of its Hindu occupants, robbed of all they had about them, even to their scanty clothing, exposed to cruel insults from the dregs of the

* Kaye; Trotter; Chambers.

people, and glad to accept in alms from pitying strangers the rags that made shift to cover them and the food that just kept them alive, a score or so of these poor wanderers of both sexes underwent with the patience, whether of Stoics or of Christians, a course of bitter suffering, prolonged for many days. Some of the fugitives perished by the way, and a few were left behind by those who could carry them no further. But the men and women of each party loyally helped each other to the best of their failing powers; two of the latter, for instance, saving a wounded officer who would else have laid himself down to die. Delicate ladies bore up stoutly against the hardest trials, never murmuring, or flinching, or distressing their companions by any show of terror or despair. The story of the memorable retreat from Kábul contains nothing more heroic than the fortitude displayed by some of our countrywomen during the disastrous flight from Delhi.*

Of all who shared in that flight none lived to tell so strange a tale of suffering and adventure as Dr. Batson, Surgeon to the 74th Sepoys. Disguised as a Fakeer, he set off from the Flagstaff Tower, the bearer of a letter from Colonel Graves, which he had undertaken to convey to Meerut. He had hardly got clear of the blazing cantonments, when he fell among village-thieves, who left him naked but alive. Taking to the Karnál road, he met two of the rebel troopers, who were going to cut him down, when he threw himself at their feet and begged them in the name of their own prophet, Mahomet, whose praises he uttered in their own language, to spare his life. His prayer was granted; but a mile further on he came up with some Mohammadan villagers, who dragged him off with his hands bound to their own village. In a few moments he would have been a dead man. But something happened to draw his captors away from their intended victim; and again he ran on. Some friendly smiths from the Delhi magazine took him to a hut and gave him food and clothing. The Farangi doctor found favour with the village folk, whose ailments he helped to cure or to alleviate. Fearing the punishment decreed by the Delhi rebels against all who harboured white men, the villagers of Bádri took food by night to the mango-tope where Batson lay hidden during five long days. His next hiding-place was an outhouse filled with *bhúsa* or chopped straw. Once more disguised as a Fakeer, he made his slow way northwards from village to village, dogged always by the fear of discovery, and filled with sad misgivings about the fate of his wife and

* Kaye; Trotter; Narratives of Vibart, Holland, Batson, &c.

children. One man who detected him by reason of his blue eyes refused to betray him. At last, after twenty-five days of cruel hardship and anxiety, he was picked up by two officers of his own regiment, who brought him safe into Karnál, thankful even less for his own deliverance than for the joy of learning that his family were at Meerut safe and well.*

For a few days after the flight from Delhi some fifty men, women, and children of European birth lay huddled together in a dark underground room of the Palace, half starved, and exposed to insulting threats and jeers from the Palace-guards. At last, on the 16th of May, these poor creatures, the last remnant of their race in Delhi, were led out like sheep to the slaughter. In a courtyard surrounded by a throng of exultant natives, they underwent their doom at the hands of swordsmen who made short work of their helpless victims. Only one woman and her three children escaped by calling themselves Mohammadans. The mangled bodies were then carted off and thrown like rubbish into the river. And thus ended the first act of the great tragedy which arose out of the chance meeting of a lascar and a Brahman in the Dumdum Bazaar.

* Batson's Narrative; Chambers.

CHAPTER III.

THE PANJÁB AND THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCES.

THAT the murderous outbreak of the 11th of May owed its successful course entirely to the absence of European troops, the foregoing chapter has but too clearly shown. Even the few guns in Delhi cantonments were served by native gunners alone. With the help of a few score English gunners Willoughby might have held the magazine for hours. More than one Viceroy and Commander-in-chief had protested against the policy of leaving the chief city and the largest arsenal of Upper India unguarded by white troops of any kind. But on one plea or another, such as the unhealthiness of Delhi itself, the comparative nearness of our troops at Meerut, the deference outwardly due to the puppet sovereign who reigned by sufferance within his palace gates, the Court of Directors had always ruled that nothing could be done to ensure either city or arsenal against the perils of a popular outbreak aided or engendered by a Sepoy revolt. And when the storm burst upon our hapless countrymen, Meerut for any helpful purpose proved no nearer the scene of mischief than Calcutta. Not a soldier nor a gun went forth from Hewitt's garrison to save the English at Delhi from approaching doom. As late as two o'clock that afternoon the presence of a squadron or two of carbineers and a troop of horse-artillery would have enabled Willoughby to hold his ground, and deterred most of the Delhi Sepoys from an open rising under conditions greatly hostile to its success. They never came; the magazine was blown up, and the last batch of Sepoys joined the mutineers. Even then, had any help come from Meerut, the stampede from the Ridge with all its attendant miseries might never have taken place. But the sun went down, the last of the forlorn English were fleeing for their lives, and the brief twilight faded into a darkness which seemed to typify the eclipse already deepening over the fame and fortunes of British India.

With regard to the untoward inaction at Meerut, it must be allowed that the troops there quartered were very ill prepared

against any sudden or strange demand upon their seeming strength. There was hardly a battery fit to move anywhere at short notice. One-half of the dragoons either had no horses to ride or were still learning their mounted drill. Of military reasons against a forward movement there was of course no lack. The professional mind is always prone to work in grooves, and the risks attending any breach of ordinary rule were on this occasion obvious enough. But strong men having to deal with a crisis which demanded prompt action of the heroic kind would have broken through the meshes of ordinary rule, and run some risk of failure in the attempt to avert a great catastrophe. They would have seen instinctively where at that moment the real danger lay, and have hurried off to Delhi every soldier whom Meerut could well or even ill spare. Unhappily no such men were to be found among the military leaders at Meerut; and a great catastrophe was the sad result of their over-caution or their blind adherence to hard-and-fast rules.

From the Moghal capital the flame of revolt spread out fast and far, proving, as it licked up station after station, how vast a network of evil influences lay everywhere about our feet. It has often been averred that the rising at Meerut forestalled by a few weeks the sudden outburst of many simultaneous fires, in which thousands of doomed Farangis would have been swallowed up as swiftly as sometimes in the East whole towns and villages are overswept by the vast storm-wave of a cyclone. Had the wrath of the 3rd Cavalry smouldered a little longer, had the tongues of bazaar-women at Meerut been a little less sharp against the native troopers,* it may be that a wider and more woful ruin would in due time have befallen our unprepared countrymen in the North-West. But the evidence for such a theory, however strong it seemed at the time to men of undoubted shrewdness, falls far short of historic proof. And, happily for our countrymen, the tidings of a murderous outbreak at Delhi were telegraphed to Agra and Ambála before the rebels had time to cut the wires. From those two places the alarming message was flashed on by the same wondrous agency to station after station above and below the seat of insurrection, so that men's eyes should no longer remain closed to the real meaning of the strife thus ominously begun.†

* The courtesans of the bazaar had taunted the troopers with cowardice for lettin their comrades be carried off in fetters to the jail—(J. C. Wilson's Offici Narrative).

† Kaye; Trotter; "Life of Sir H. Edwardes."

To be thus forewarned, however, was not in all cases to be forearmed. Not every station was blest with the wise boldness, the ready forecast of a Lawrence, a Montgomery, or an Edwardes. At Firózpur, for instance, on the 12th of May, Brigadier Innes became aware of the Meerut and Delhi disasters. He was an old Company's officer of fair repute who had only just taken up his new command. Of the Sepoy regiments in his brigade, he was told that the 45th and the 57th held their heads unpleasantly high, while the 10th Cavalry were still deemed worthy of all trust. A company of the 5th guarded the fort, an earthwork surrounding an arsenal second in importance to that of Philaur. The 61st Foot and two companies of British Artillery formed no mean counterpoise to the native garrison in cantonments. No time seems to have been lost in throwing a company of the 61st into the intrenched magazine; but through a curious oversight the displaced Sepoys were allowed to stand fast. Instead of disarming the suspected regiments at once, the Brigadier resolved only to separate them. On the afternoon of the 13th, after a speech from Colonel Innes, the two regiments began with seeming readiness to march off each towards its allotted camping-ground outside the station. Suddenly, as they passed near the fort, the 45th halted; then with muskets loaded they rushed forward, scrambled over the outer parapet, which was half in ruins, and surged up against the walls of the magazine itself. Scaling-ladders were flung out to them by the Sepoys who had been left within. For a few moments it seemed as if Firózpur might share the fate of Delhi.

Happily the small English garrison in the fort proved equal to the need of the moment. The steady fire from a few files of determined men checked the mutineers in their headlong rush upon the magazine, while other of our brave soldiers turned upon the traitors within their gates. Fresh onsets from other quarters met with a like repulse. By that time the mutineers' chance was over. Two companies of the 61st, hurrying up to their comrades' help, charged among the disordered assailants and scattered them like sheep at the bayonet's point. Many were killed on the spot or badly wounded. The rest fled helter-skelter out of harm's reach. The company of the 57th was disarmed and turned out of the fort. But no effort was made to improve betimes the advantage already won. While Innes contented himself for that night with holding the fort and the European barracks, many of his officers chafed at the inaction which doomed them only to listen to the noise of armed insurgents engaged in plundering and setting fire

to building after building about the cantonments, even to the church and the Roman Catholic chapel. Next morning, when the mutineers were already marching off towards Delhi, the Brigadier gave the order to pursue. Chased for some twelve miles by a squadron of the 10th Cavalry and two light guns, many of the Sepoys threw away their arms, some were slain, and others taken prisoners; but many more made good their escape. At the same time the Sepoys of the 57th, less bold, if not less mutinous at heart than their comrades of the 45th, went through that process of disarming which, applied to both regiments a day earlier, would have saved the station from a night of fear and havoc, the fort from almost capture, and the Brigadier himself from consequent reproach. One good lesson, however, came out of the Firózpur mutiny. If one of the smartest regiments in the Bengal Army proved thus faithless to its salt, what trust could thenceforth be placed in any regiment of Bengal Sepoys? Was it not clear to all but a few staunch believers in Sepoy loyalty that one regiment after another would on fit occasion succumb to the same disease? The only hope left in the future was that other bodies of mutinous Sepoys might copy the forbearance of the 45th, who never harmed their white officers, instead of vying with the murderous fury shown by the Delhi troops.*

If the Firózpur magazine was saved, that of Philaur, on the right bank of the Satlaj, opposite Lúdiána, might yet fall a prey to sudden treachery. Held only by native troops, it lay for a moment at the mercy of men already sickening with the prevalent disease. But the few Englishmen who, under Lieutenant Griffith, had special charge of the Ordnance stores, were soon to be relieved of their worst anxieties. While Colonel Butler and the officers of the 3rd Native Infantry were taking all due precautions on their side, Griffith learned that his urgent prayer for help had been answered from Jalandhar by the prompt despatch of two companies from the 8th Foot and a troop of Panjábi Horse, besides two horse-artillery guns. At sunset of the 12th the fort-gates were closed, and Griffith's small party stood ready beside their guns for any emergency. After a night of anxious watching, the handful of Englishmen in the fort and the cantonments were gladdened by the sight of their succouring countrymen, all tired and dusty from a forced march of twenty-four miles. When the white soldiers marched into the fort, and native sentries were replaced by European, the Sepoys knew that their best chance of captur-

* Kaye; Trotter.

ing the chief arsenal in the Panjáb had passed away. Happily also for Jalandhar itself, the native troops in that important station had just been debarred from doing immediate mischief by the prompt precautions of Colonel Hartley, aided not a little by the friendly influence of a neighbouring Sikh Rajah, Ranbhír Singh.

About forty miles north-westward of Jalandhar lay the populous city of Amritsar, the Sikh Banáras, commanded by the neighbouring fortress of Govindgarh. In the fort or the cantonments outside were two companies of artillery, one native, and a regiment of native infantry. The city itself, with its twofold population of Sikhs and Mohammadans, might at any moment make common cause with the Sepoys of the 59th. But the energy of the civil magistrates, above all of Mr. Cooper, the Deputy Commissioner, kept Amritsar free from disturbance, and roused the peasantry of the district to take up arms in defence of the ruling powers. Meanwhile Montgomery, at Lahór, was preparing timely succours for his imperilled countrymen; and a company of the 81st Foot, hurried off in native pony-carts from Miánmír on the evening of the 13th, made mutiny thenceforth a dangerous game to play against the defenders of Govindgarh.*

Yet more momentous were the issues staked on the conduct of British officers at Pesháwar and Lahór. When the sad tidings from Meerut and Delhi reached the latter city on the 12th of May, its fort and the neighbouring cantonments of Miánmír were garrisoned by three regiments of Sepoy infantry, one of native horse, the 81st Foot, two troops and three companies of artillery. On the loyalty of the hundred thousand Sikhs, Hindus, and Musalmans within its walls it seemed vain to count, in the presence of any strong temptation to rebel. The awe inspired throughout the Panjáb by the strong personal qualities of its English rulers, might not remain proof to the whispers of awakened pride or patriotism, to the sting of wounded prejudices, to the spurrings of a starved ambition, of an inveterate thirst for change, for revenge, for mere plunder. The great English Chief himself, Sir John Lawrence, had gone off to recruit his failing health amid the bracing breezes of Ráwal-Pindi and the Marri Hills. But the men who acted for him at Lahór were worthy of the crisis. On the night of this 12th of May a ball had been fixed to come off at Miánmír. It came off as quietly as that other had done at Brussels on the night before Quatre Bras. But the officers who went to it knew that next morning they would have to attend a grand

* Kaye; Trotter; Cooper's "Crisis in the Panjáb."

parade of the whole Miánmír garrison. During a quiet conference with Montgomery and an officer of his staff, Brigadier Corbett, a fine old Company's officer of forty years' service, undertook to deprive his Sepoys not only of their ammunition, but of their arms; a measure first proposed by Captain Richard Lawrence, head of the Panjáb Police, who had learned from a faithful Brahman that the native troops at Miánmír were already "full of sedition up to their throats."

Early the next morning, therefore, the whole of the Lahór brigade were drawn up in line of columns on the Miánmír ground, to hear the reading of the General Order concerning the half-forgotten mutiny of Barrackpore. Montgomery, Roberts, and other of the civil chiefs watched on horseback the course of events. After the reading the troops went through certain manœuvres, which resulted in placing the four native regiments, about 2,500 strong, face to face with 400 of the 81st Foot, and about 200 gunners with twelve guns ready for work. A staff officer, in the Brigadier's name, then informed the wondering Sepoys, that for their own good, in view of what had happened elsewhere, they must now prepare to surrender their arms. On hearing the order given to unbuckle sabres and pile arms, they seemed for a moment uncertain what to do. But certain death glowered from 600 stern white faces; from the light of a dozen port-fires; from a resolute array of loaded muskets and fixed bayonets; and the order which aimed at forestalling a probable outbreak was sullenly obeyed. Inside the citadel of Lahór a like scene was enacting at the same hour. Three companies of the 81st Foot quietly disarmed a wing of the 26th Sepoy infantry, and sent them off to join their crestfallen comrades at Miánmír. This done, and other precautions duly taken, a company of the 81st was hurried off the same evening to make all safe, as we have seen, at Govindgarh. A company of artillery also hastened thither, with orders to march on afterwards to Philaur.*

From Lahór, an account of the disarming, and a general outline of the events at Meerut and Delhi, were flashed on by telegraph the same day to Pesháwar. Lawrence himself, who was then halted at Ráwal-Pindi, had already awoke to a keen sense of the danger which, like most of his countrymen, he had hitherto underrated. Ill as he was, he lost no time and spared no effort in battling with the storm which, already raging beyond the Satlaj, might at any moment burst over the Panjáb. He sent off tele-

* Kaye; Trotter.

grams, followed by letters, to General Anson and Lord Canning, urging the former to disarm the Sepoys at Ambála, and to march at once with such troops as he could muster against Delhi; and asking leave of the latter to raise a body of Sikh Irregulars for immediate service in aid of his British troops. About the safety of his own province, guarded by 10,000 good British soldiers, the great Chief Commissioner had few misgivings, if only he might reckon upon the safety of Pesháwar and the loyalty of the Sikh princes beyond the Satlaj. He summoned the latter at once to take up arms in defence of their English friends and protectors. From the great mass of his own subjects, he knew that his countrymen had little harm to fear. His name, indeed, had become a tower of strength for the millions who dwelt in peace and comfort under a ruler so strong, so just, so merciful. There was no love lost between the Sikh soldiery and the Indian Sepoys. Among the old Sikh and Musalman nobles he might count upon many loyal friends or philosophic believers in the decrees of Fate. His relations with the border tribes had been growing yearly more and more hopeful. His new-born friendship with Dost Mohammad had just been crowned by the arrival of Lumsden's Mission at Kandáhár. But the great frontier city of Pesháwar, peopled largely with men of the border races, was guarded by a force which, however imposing to look at, contained the elements of a serious danger; for the Sepoys outnumbered the white men by three to one, while in other parts of the Pesháwar district the odds against us were far heavier.

At such a moment stout hearts and ready hands, under the guidance of clear active brains, were not found wanting in the Pesháwar cantonments. Colonel Sydney Cotton, an old Queen's officer well-skilled in frontier warfare, commanded the brigade. Major-General Reed, who commanded the Pesháwar Division, Colonel Herbert Edwardes, the able Commissioner, and his new Deputy, the fearless, the high-souled, the iron-limbed John Nicholson, were all present at the same place. These four, with Colonel Neville Chamberlain, the brave and trusted commander of the Panjáb Frontier Force, who had just ridden over from Kohát, held on the 13th of May a council of war, in which Lawrence himself, by means of the telegraph, bore his part. They agreed to form at Jhilam a Movable Column of picked troops, ready to march upon any point where danger might threaten or rebellion rear its head. It was also decided that certain of the Sepoy regiments should change places with Sikh and Panjábi troops called in from outlying posts

to guard strongholds like Atak, to strengthen our hold on Jhilam and Pesháwar, and to swell the numbers of the Movable Column. To General Reed himself was assigned the chief command of all the forces in the Panjáb; a duty which, by removing him to Ráwal-Pindi, would bring him, as Edwardes and Nicholson meant it should, into perfect, if unconscious harmony with the views and purposes of the Chief Commissioner. Once planted by the side of his civil chief, the new Military Dictator would dictate nothing of which "John Lawrence, with Herbert Edwardes for his Vázir," might not approve.*

Only a few hours after the council broke up, the 39th, 55th, and 64th Sepoys were marching severally out of Jhilam, Naushéra and Pesháwar, in high spirits, or so it seemed, at the prospect of a fresh campaign against the border tribes. The command of the Movable Column was entrusted by General Anson to Colonel Chamberlain, while Brigadier Cotton held military rule over all the stations beyond the Indus. The fortress of Atak, perched on a cliff that overhangs the swift-flowing Indus, where a boat-bridge links the road from Jhilam with the road to Pesháwar, was speedily garrisoned by Pathán troops, summoned thither from Kohát.

But all these measures fell short of the actual need, as viewed from the first by Lawrence himself. His proposal to disarm the Sepoys at Pesháwar had been overruled by the council of war, but the need for disarming them grew daily more visible. Of the seven native regiments left at Pesháwar four were known to be disaffected. The English at that station might easily cope with a *Purbia*† rising; but what if the sixty or seventy thousand citizens, if the fierce border tribes, Afridi, Momand, Yusafzai, and Khatak, numbering myriads of armed freebooters, were to swell the torrent of open strife? It was idle for commandants of doubtful regiments to pledge their word for the loyalty of their Sepoy "children," when the letters intercepted by Edwardes told another tale. Recruits for the new levies were coming in very slowly, as if the Patháns of the border shrank from fighting for a doubtful cause. On the night of the 21st May it became known to the Commissioner of Pesháwar, that native troops had mutinied, both at Naushéra and Mardán. Armed with that knowledge, Edwardes and Nicholson at once took counsel with Brigadier

* Kaye; Malleson; Trotter.

† Most of the Bengal Sepoys came from the *Púrab*, the East; that is, from the country eastward of the Jamna.

Cotton, who readily gave the word for prompt action against a growing danger. It was arranged that three regiments of Sepoy infantry and one of cavalry should be disarmed at once, while the other three, two of which were Irregulars, would be reserved for the necessary duties of the station.

Before sunrise of the 22nd, each of the doomed regiments, as it stood in parade order on its own ground, saw itself confronted by half a British regiment and a battery of field-pieces ready loaded. Some border levies from Kohát formed up in rear of the Sepoys. Cowed by the suddenness of a stroke thus skilfully delivered, amidst the visible grief, sometimes the audible murmurs, of their own officers, each of the four regiments obeyed the order to give up their arms. Of the Sepoy infantry, one regiment alone, the 21st, was allowed to retain its arms in reward for its apparent freedom from the common taint. The disarmed soldiery were thenceforth kept under close watch; and that morning's lesson was shortly followed up by the hanging of a Subadar-Major of the 51st Sepoys in the presence of the whole brigade.*

The effect of this "master-stroke," as Lawrence called the disarming, was magical. It began to show itself that very morning in the contrast between the few native friends who had followed Edwardes to the parade-ground, and the many who, "thick as summer flies," greeted him on his way back. They had seen which way the tide was turning, and were ready to cast in their lot with the winning side. From that moment the recruiting difficulty disappeared. Afridis, Momands, Yusafzais, flocked in from across the border to fight for the twice-proven masters of the Panjáb. With the help of these levies Nicholson was enabled to inflict stern vengeance on the mutineers of the 55th, flying from Mardán, while the Afridi tribesmen showed their good-will by giving over to justice some two hundred runaways from one of the disarmed regiments at Pesháwar.

The fate of the mutinous 55th might well have deterred the boldest of their comrades from following their example, had the madness of mere panic played no part in the outbreaks of that woful year. At Naushéra, on the Kábul river, halfway between Atak and Pesháwar, two companies of the 55th broke into open mutiny as soon as the 27th Foot had turned their backs upon the place. Baffled by Taylor of the Engineers in their attempt to seize the bridge of boats, they were afterwards quietly marched off to the new head-quarters of their regiment at Mardán, a frontier

* Kaye; Malleson; Trotter; Edwardes's Official Report.

post to the north of Pesháwar. But the mutinous spirit had spread through the whole regiment, and a message from Mardán to that effect reached Pesháwar, as we saw, on the 21st. The fitting answer was promptly given. On the 23rd a picked body of horse, foot, and guns, under Colonel Chute of the 70th, aided by some of the new levies and the mounted police under Nicholson, hurried off towards the scene of tumult, while Vaughan's Panjáb infantry set out from Atak on the same errand. At daybreak on the 25th, when these troops came in sight of the fort, the mutineers made off for the Swát Valley, leaving their officers unhurt behind them; all, at least, save their unhappy colonel, who, in the anguish of his soul at the treachery of those whom to the last he had blindly trusted, had already laid violent hands upon his own life.

But the way of safety was not that which these fugitives took. Nicholson and Lind, with a few hundred troopers, dashed after them in keen pursuit, scarce checked by the sun's fierce heat or the thirst and weariness of their previous march. Before sunset a hundred of the runaways had been slain, and two hundred taken prisoners; forty of whom were afterwards blown from guns before the assembled garrison of Pesháwar, while the rest were allowed in chains and lifelong drudgery to mourn the consequences of their mad revolt. Nor did those who escaped the pursuit of Nicholson's horsemen elude the Nemesis which dogged their steps at every turn. Betrayed for money by the highlanders of Swát, warned off their grounds by the fierce warriors of Kághan, hunted down by Edwardes's police and the soldiers of Guláb Singh, the faithful Rajah of Kashmír, nearly all of them fell beneath the weapons of their pursuers, or lived to undergo the death awarded by the forms of martial law to traitors caught in the act. With the exception of a few score men, mostly Sikhs, who had all along stood by their officers, the whole regiment was fairly blotted out of being. Not less swift and exemplary was the doom inflicted on those Sepoys of the disarmed 51st whom the Afridis brought back to Pesháwar. Some of the ringleaders were hanged or blown away from guns; the rest in due time had to undergo a life of forced labour in the savage solitudes of the Andaman Islands.*

By this time Sir John Lawrence knew that he could depend upon the active loyalty of the great Sikh Chiefs who ruled on either side of the Sátlaj. That loyalty he had hastened at the first breath of danger to test by calling upon them for such aid as

* Kaye; Edwardes; Trotter; Cooper.

they could severally render the Paramount Power. And nobly did they answer the summons conveyed to them by Mr. Barnes and other Political Officers. If for a moment one or two of them might waver between their duty and their ambition, the decision once formed was speedily followed up. The noble Rajah of Patiála, the acknowledged head of the Sikh brotherhood, at once marched with all his forces towards Ambála, sent his spare carriage to Kálka for the conveyance of British troops from the Simla Hills, and detached a body of his own men with a few guns to guard the district of Thanésar, lying between Ambála and Karnál. Other of his troops were presently posted along the high road from Karnál to Firózpur, or played their part in the fighting before Delhi. "His support at such a crisis"—wrote Mr. Barnes, the active commissioner for the Cis-Satlaj States—"was worth a brigade of English troops to us, and served more to tranquillize the people than a hundred official disclaimers would have done." South of Patiála lay the little State of Jhind, whose stout-hearted Rajah, Sarup Singh, not only led his little force to Karnál, but took a distinguished part in the subsequent fighting and hard work around Delhi. The young Rajah of Nabha, with eight hundred men and two guns, kept guard over Lúdiána for the next six months, furnished escorts for our guns, soldiers and supplies for the field, and, like him of Patiála, spared neither money nor personal efforts in the common cause.*

Great also were the services rendered in that hour of need by the noble Rajah of Kapurthalla in the Jalandhar Doáb. Marching into the station of Jalandhar at the head of his troops, he helped for some months to guard that place and to keep order throughout the district. The following year saw him and his brother fighting bravely shoulder to shoulder with their English friends on the plains of Oudh. In Guláb Singh of Kashmir Lawrence had already secured a valuable ally, and the son who presently succeeded him faithfully fulfilled the promises made by his sagacious father. On the side of Afghánistán the goodwill of Dost Mohammad withstood the pleadings of many counsellors who would gladly have helped to recover his old province of Pesháwar from the hands of his new Farangi friends. His letters to Edwardes, who had been instructed from Ráwal-Pindi to promise the aged warrior a continuance of the subsidy paid him during the Persian War, expressed in terms of Eastern eloquence

* Lepel Griffin's "Rajahs of the Panjáb."

the Amir's sympathy with our misfortunes, and his firm adherence to the cause of his ancient foes.*

Not less conspicuous was the loyalty displayed by Sikh and Mohammadan nobles and gentry in nearly all parts of the Panjáb. There was no mistaking the zeal with which sturdy old warriors like Tej Singh, Shamsher Singh, Jawáhar Singh, and many more raised regiments or armed their retainers in aid of their old antagonists of Sobráon and Gujarát. In the very first days of his new trial Lawrence sent for his Sikh aide-de-camp, old Nihál Singh, to help him in making out lists of all the Sikh chiefs who had suffered for the rebellion of 1848. To each he wrote off at once, urging him to retrieve his name by bringing a certain number of his retainers to Ráwal-Pindi. As they came in, the Chief Commissioner carefully inspected each retainer or recruit before passing him into the ranks of his new levies. Out of the pick of the first comers he formed a regiment of Sikh Horse, which was erelong doing right good service in the camp before Delhi.† And when the Sikhs who had lately enlisted into the old Sepoy regiments were everywhere coming forward to reveal their comrades' plottings, and to ask for service in the new levies, Lawrence felt himself free to act vigorously against the dangers that still beset him and his countrymen in the Panjáb. Cut off from direct communication with Calcutta, and cheered by the loyal bearing of his own subjects, he was free to follow out his own policy, unhampered by the need of taking counsel with the head of a Government seated on the banks of the far distant Húghli.

A public loan was straightway opened in the Panjáb. All native letters sent by post were examined without a scruple; all persons of doubtful character were seized, disarmed, and, if unable to prove their innocence, locked up till further orders. "Learned Maulvis were seized in the midst of a crowd of fanatic worshippers, and men of distinction and note were 'wanted' at dead of night."‡ The Movable Column under Neville Chamberlain was already marching about the country, prepared to strike a blow at the first disturbers of the public peace. All outlying treasure was brought into the Central stations; the jail guards were everywhere strengthened, and abundant stores were laid in at Lahór and Govindgarh. The *Purbia* or Hindustáni element was gradually weeded out of the public offices and the police, while a multitude

* Lepel Griffin; Malleson; Kaye.

† Mr. A. Brandreth's Letter to the *Times* of July 29, 1879.

‡ Cooper.

of camp-followers were quietly deported out of the province. For the speedier execution of justice on proved criminals, it was ordained that any two civil officers might form a special commission empowered to try all political cases, and to inflict at need the punishment of death. Meanwhile, in the words of Mr. Cooper, the chief civil officer at Amritsar, "the ordinary courts suspended not their functions, but the civil and criminal business was carried on with as much apparent calmness as if the most commonplace occurrences of tranquil government existence were taking place, and the flames of rebellion were not lapping up province after province in Hindustan."

In seeking to make all safe within his own province the Chief Commissioner never forgot how much was staked on the efforts made by his countrymen to stay the rising tide of mutiny and revolt elsewhere. It was clear that the Sepoy outbreak had settled down—as Edwardes put it—"into a struggle for empire under Mohammadan guidance, with the Moghal capital for its centre." Keenly alive to the dangers that threatened the whole of Upper India, he felt himself bound to work heart and soul for the salvation of his countrymen outside the Panjáb. With the quick eye at once of a soldier and a statesman, he saw that Delhi must be retaken at all hazards with the least possible delay; and he resolved that no efforts, no sacrifices on his part should be wanting to the achievement of so cardinal an end. From the first he kept sending urgent messages to Ambála, where Anson was still awaiting the right moment for a march on the insurgent stronghold by the Jamna. "On to Delhi," before the rebels had time to strengthen its defences or to add greatly to their numbers, was Lawrence's oft-repeated cry. Once he heard that, instead of marching on Delhi, the military leaders talked of intrenching themselves at Ambála. "Clubs are trumps, not spades," was the answer promptly telegraphed from Ráwal-Pindi.* As early as the 18th of May the splendid Corps of Guides, then halted for a few hours at Ráwal-Pindi on its hurried march from Mardán, was ordered off in hot haste to reinforce the little army destined for the siege of Delhi. This body of picked Pathán, horse and foot, already famous for its prowess and high soldiership, was but the first of many succours which the Chief Commissioner kept on sending forward from his own province to the British camp. Week after week he fed the force that guarded the memorable Ridge

* Lady Edwardes claims the authorship of this wise jest for her own husband.

with fresh supplies of men, arms, and stores of every kind; deliberately draining the Panjáb of everything that might, however hardly, be spared in furtherance of the common weal. But for the help thus freely given at no small risk to his own province, the siege of Delhi must have been raised, for no help could have come betimes either from Bengal or Bombay; and all the fair provinces between the Indus and Nipál would have been engulfed in one vast sea of rebellion, bloodshed, rapine, and armed riot.*

It is time, however, to follow the course of events in the country eastward of the Satlaj. At Ambála, on the 16th of May, the very day of the Meerut rising, two Sepoy regiments, the 5th and the 60th, paraded without orders, stood as if by preconcert to their arms, and in some cases raised their loaded muskets against their own officers. But the sudden ferment seems to have been as suddenly allayed, and the men returned to their duty without other driving than their officers' words. Next afternoon, Ambála was shocked by the first hurried tidings of a furious outbreak in Delhi itself. An urgent message from General Barnard, commanding the Sirhind Division, brought Anson down to Ambála from his pleasant resting-place in the Simla hills. From the pine-clad ridges of Kasauli, from the brown rocks of Dagshai, and the grey slopes of Sabáthu, the 75th Foot, and the two regiments of Bengal Fusiliers, got ready at a few hours' warning to march with all speed to Ambála. On what stern errand they had thus been called out from their cool summer perches to face the fiery sirocco of the plains, none at that moment clearly foresaw. But no thought of danger or discomfort, nothing but the soldier's buoyant cheerfulness and a fierce longing for revenge on the murderers of English women and children spoke out in the glowing faces, quick, light steps, and proud cheers of each brave regiment, as in long, red column of sections it poured down the narrow winding road that led to Kálka and the plains of Sirhind.†

By the 17th of May the last of these regiments had reached Ambála, raising the British Force there present to an effective strength of 2,500 men, with twelve six-pounder guns. Forty more gunners erelong came in from Firózpur. Of the three native regiments at Ambála, two were altogether worthless, and ought to have been at once disarmed. Instead of disarming them, Anson sent away part of the 5th Sepoys to sow mutiny broadcast at Rupar and Saháranpur, while the 60th were sworn again to their colours and affectionately bidden to plot no more. The Sarmúr Battalion, a

* Kaye; Malleson; Trotter. † Trotter.

fine body of Gorkhas, short, ugly, and thickset, was ordered from the Dhún or valley of Déra to set free some of our white troops at Meerut for active service under the Commander-in-Chief. The Patiála troops helped to guard against sudden treachery the great mid-station between Delhi and Lahór, while the Jhind Rajah kept open the road from Ambála to Pánipat. The siege train which Lawrence was getting ready at Philaur was to be escorted down by the Gorkhas of the Nasírí Battalion, which Anson had left behind him on the bare back of Jatógh, a mountain ridge at the western end of Simla.

But the Nasírí regiment was hard at first to move. Whether the men were somewhat tainted with the plague of disaffection, or merely demurred to leaving their families and goods in strange hands, certain it is that for two days the whole regiment was seething with a spirit nearly akin to active mutiny. They talked wildly to their few officers, sometimes with threatening gestures; once they seemed on the point of marching into Simla, whose bazaars swarmed with fellows ripe for any mischief. One company on guard at Kasauli plundered the treasure-chest, and marched back defiantly to Jatógh. A great panic seized on the English at Simla. Men, women, even officers fled helter-skelter down the hillsides, away from the dreaded Gorkhas and the ruffians of the bazaars. But presently the frightened or mutinous regiment got soothed or reasoned into a better frame of mind. The deserters from Kasauli were placed in arrest by their own comrades; and on the 19th of May Major Bagot, with his penitent Gorkhas, reached Sabáthu on their way down to the plains. Other troops, meanwhile, had hastened in their stead to Philaur; but the erring regiment was erelong earning its pardon by loyal service in the Saháranpur district, where Robert Spankie, the civil magistrate, held his ground for months against the growing disaffection with a skill and courage not always rivalled elsewhere.*

To push on with all possible haste for Delhi was now the one thought of every Englishman in the North-West, of every Englishman, indeed, throughout India. "Every exertion must be made to regain Delhi; every hour is of importance"—were the words of Lord Canning's message to Mr. Colvin at Agra. From Pánipat down to Delhi and Meerut the whole country was already aflame with revolt. Each hour's delay at Ambála seemed like giving fresh hope and courage to the mutineers. But carriage, stores, and shelter even for Anson's small army could not be

* Trotter; Keene.

found in a moment. The Ambála Commissariat, good for ordinary purposes, now broke down altogether. Before its shortcomings were made good by the unwearied energy of the deputy commissioner, Mr. Douglas Forsyth, some precious days had slipped by, and the health of Anson's soldiers began to give way.

Not till the 25th of May did the last detachment leave Ambála, accompanied by the Commander-in-Chief himself. Two days later Anson lay dead of cholera and overwork at Karnál. His place as commander of the Delhi field force was filled by Sir Henry Barnard, who by the 4th of June had his troops all encamped together at Rai, about twenty miles from the rebel stronghold. On the 6th the siege-train, which had narrowly escaped seizure by more than one band of mutineers, and been well-nigh stopped by a swollen river, came up with the main body halted at Alipur, a march beyond Rai.*

Next morning, Sir Henry's little force was strengthened by the troops whom Brigadier Wilson had led out from Meerut on the 27th of May. The junction had not been effected without some hard fighting. On the 30th of May, at Ghazi-ud-din-nagar, where an iron bridge carries the road from Meerut across the Hindan river, Wilson found himself fiercely assailed by several thousand Sepoys, armed with five or six heavy guns. Answering the enemy's fire with his two eighteen-pounders, Wilson sent a body of horse, foot, and guns to cross the river where they could, and turn the enemy's left flank. When the success of this movement began to show itself, the 60th Rifles were led by Colonel Jones across the bridge with a rush which soon carried the guns in their front. The rebels fled into the neighbouring village. One more hand-to-hand struggle left Wilson's soldiers masters of the field, of five guns, and much ammunition. Chased by the Carabineers, the routed enemy fled far towards Delhi. But they had not yet had enough of beating. Next day, a large body of rebels, horse and foot, opened fire on our troops from half a dozen fresh guns. On Wilson's side a renewal of the same tactics was rewarded with a like success. After some hours' fighting, the assailants were driven off, this time saving their guns from the hands of victors too jaded to follow them up. In these two fights our loss amounted to fifty-six killed or disabled, ten of whom were laid low by sunstroke, an enemy destined to prove almost as fatal as shot and steel. Thenceforth, however, the road was left clear for Wilson's advance. On the 3rd of June, strengthened by another company of the

* Kaye; Trotter.

Rifles, and about 500 Gorkhas of the Sarmúr Battalion, Wilson resumed his march to the appointed meeting-place at 'Alipur.*

By the 7th of June the force assembled under Sir H. Barnard amounted in round numbers to four thousand men, nearly all British and all trustworthy. The cavalry consisted of the 9th Lancers and two squadrons of Carabineers. Three troops of horse-artillery manned sixteen light guns, while six nine-pounders and twenty-eight heavy guns and mortars were served by two companies of foot-artillery aided by a hundred artillery recruits. The 60th Rifles, the 75th Foot, the 1st Bengal Fusiliers, six companies of the 2nd Fusiliers, and five hundred of the Sarmúr Battalion made up the whole infantry then in camp. Of the native Sappers and Miners about a hundred and fifty were also present, the rest having already mutinied at Rúrki and Meerut. With this mere fragment of an army the British general was about to attempt the siege of a great walled city furnished with ample means of defence, and garrisoned by an army already far outnumbering his own.†

Meanwhile the list of mutinies, of murdered victims to native treachery or panic, had been daily lengthening. Before the end of May the outlying stations of Hánsi, Hissar, and Sarsa, to the north-west of Delhi, had been turned by the men of the Hariána Battalion into the ruined graves of nearly all their English occupants. At Nasírabád, in the British district of Ajmír, two hundred and fifty miles south-west of Delhi, two Sepoy regiments and a company of native gunners rose against their officers on the 29th of May, beat back the Bombay Lancers who had been ordered to retake the captured guns, and set off that night with all their arms and plunder for Delhi. A few days later the English at Nimach, on the western frontier of Indor, were flying for their lives from the presence of a whole garrison risen in revolt; the Sepoys and gunners of the Gwáliár Contingent making common cause with the 72nd Native Infantry. The timely precautions taken by Colonel George Lawrence, the new Political Agent for Rájputána, alone saved the important city of Ajmír from the storm that burst over Nasírabád.

Eastward of Delhi, in the fair province of Rohilkhand, mutiny and murder were also rife. On the 31st of May the English at Bareli were startled out of their peaceful dreams by a furious outbreak, in which Khán Bahádur Khán, the trusted friend and pensioner of the Government, openly took the lead. The 8th Irregulars, the 18th and 68th Sepoys, were then added to the list

* Trotter; Chambers. † Trotter; Chambers.

of blood-stained rebels. Most of their intended victims had already made their way, escorted by a few faithful troopers, to the hills of Naini-Tál; but Brigadier Sibbald and many others paid with their lives for trusting overmuch in the forbearance, the manly pride, if not in the seeming loyalty of sworn traitors. The treasury plundered, and the whole station burned down, the grey old Khán Bahádur emphasized the triumph of utter lawlessness by hanging, after a mock trial, two or three of the English gentlemen who had fallen into his hands. On that same woful Sunday the 28th Sepoys at Shahjahánpur surrounded the church wherein their victims had come together for peaceful worship, and slaughtered them nearly all. The few who escaped their clutches to find brief shelter in Oudh, were afterwards caught and murdered by the Sepoys of the 41st, fresh from the massacres of Sítápur.* Three days later Murádabád also was given over to revolt. The 29th Sepoys, hitherto quiescent, took fire from the words of their Bareli comrades passing through their lines on the way to Delhi; plundered the treasury, and, but for the speedy flight of the English towards Meerut and Naini-Tál, would erelong have stained their hands in the blood of the innocent and the helpless. From other places in the same province fugitive men, women, and children were already seeking their slow way by stealth, with the help sometimes of faithful servants or kindhearted villagers, to the goal which some of them took three months to reach. Even now it makes the heart bleed to think of the sufferings recorded in simple, touching words by some of the wanderers who survived the trials of that dark year.†

South of Delhi down to Agra, the favourite city of Akbar and Shahjahán, the place still renowned for the white chastity, the fairy-like grace of that rare marvel of Moslem art, the Táj-Mahal, which rises like a low moon from the banks of the winding Jamna over the red-walled citadel of Akbar, the flames of revolt were steadily licking up fresh stations and roaring onward from district to district. For some days after the rising at Delhi things seemed indeed to go on quietly enough. A few Sepoys from the north were said to be passing downwards, stirring up mutinous longings as they went. But the loyalty of the 9th Sepoys, who guarded the intervening stations, was still deemed as sure as their high discipline. In Agra itself, protected by the 3rd Europeans and some artillery, John Colvin, the Lieutenant-Governor, saw no reason as yet to disarm his other regiments, the 44th and 67th

* Trotter; Lawrence. † Edwardes's "Personal Adventures," &c.

Sepoys. As "a personal compliment for a short time only" he accepted Sindhia's prompt offer to aid him with his own body-guard and a few guns from the Gwáliár Contingent. Little did that noble young prince foresee the coming treachery of his own soldiers. A few days later the whole face of things was ruffling over with inevitable storm. On the 20th of May four companies of the 9th rose in sudden mutiny at Aligarh, about half-way from Agra to Delhi and Meerut. In the surprise and growing darkness Lieutenant Cockburn, who had just reached the spot with his Gwáliár Horse, could do nothing but keep back the mutineers, while the rest of our people made the best of their way to Hátrás and Agra. Next morning the whole station was a smouldering wreck, and during the next few days many fugitives from the surrounding district, chiefly indigo-planters and their families, had to undergo some sharp trials before the survivors found shelter among men of their own race. Some were slain, others more fortunate escaped with wounds and the loss of all their property, even to the clothing upon their backs.

How small a spark would sometimes set fire to the minds of a regiment hitherto faithful, this very outbreak served to show. A Brahman whom the Sepoys of the 9th had caught in the act of plotting mutiny had just been hanged at Aligarh in the sight, with the seeming approval, of the companies there paraded. At that moment a party of the same regiment returning from Bulandshahr passed near the gallows. "Behold," they cried, "a martyr to our religion!" Those few words became the signal for a sudden revolt, quickly followed by similar outbreaks at Mainpúri, Etawah, and Bulandshahr.

At Mainpúri, a small station lying eastward of Agra on the road to Fathigarh, one man's steady courage saved the town, the cantonments, and the civil treasury from plunder and imminent ruin. For three hours a very whirlpool of mutiny raged, boiling, roaring, and breaking against the slender form of young Lieutenant De Kantzow, as with looks, gestures, and words of reproach, entreaty, command, he strove to avert a crisis which seemed momently more inevitable. From the military lines to the civil treasury some three hundred angry insurgents kept bearing back their stubborn commander, whose senior was engaged elsewhere in helping the women and children to reach a safer neighbourhood. Mr. Power, the Collector-Magistrate, was the only other Englishman left in the place; and to him, seeking the best means of aiding his peril-girdled countryman, came from De Kantzow a

short urgent message, praying him not to hazard two English lives by coming to the Treasury. With a mere handful of ill-armed police the fearless subaltern kept up the nearly hopeless struggle. But for the goodwill of a few Sepoys who continually beat down their comrades' levelled muskets, his life would long since have paid the forfeit. At last, with the timely help of a leading native whom Power's exertions had enlisted in the cause of order, De Kantzow's heroism reaped its full reward. Not a rupee was taken from the well-filled Treasury. Laden with plunder from their own lines, but guiltless of bloodshed, the mutineers of the 9th set off for Delhi. Mainpúri remained safe in British keeping; and the hero of the day, at once gazetted to the command of some mounted police, soon justified in fresh encounters the terms of unstinted praise in which Lord Canning set forth the "noble example of courage, patience, good judgement, and temper" given to his brothers in arms by one so "young in years and at the outset of his career."*

By the 26th of May Aligarh had been reoccupied, much treasure recovered, and many refugees brought to a safe shelter. But Cockburn's troopers had not all followed him into Aligarh. On the 24th a hundred and twenty of them suddenly rebelled and rode away, leaving him to pursue his course with a hundred of their comrades and fifty volunteers from Agra. Bands of armed villagers were beginning to plunder the country almost within sight of our own garrisons. But Colvin seemed as yet unable or unwilling to realize the full danger of the moment. On the 20th he had telegraphed to Calcutta that a very few days would see the end of the mutiny. Five days later, in the face of what had since happened, he issued a proclamation which evoked a cry of wonder and dismay from every English circle in Upper India. "Soldiers"—he wrote—"engaged in the late disturbances, who are desirous of going to their homes, and who give up their arms at the nearest civil or military government post, and retire quietly, shall be permitted to do so unmolested." Punishment, indeed, was promised to all "evil-minded instigators of the disturbances, and those guilty of heinous crimes against private persons." But, taken as a whole, this official utterance read like an ill-timed attempt to wash out with rosewater the reek of a blood-stained rebellion. That numbers of Sepoys had joined the revolt through sheer panic or a sense of loyalty to their caste and class, seemed to our countrymen no excuse for the language thus addressed to

* Trotter; Chambers; Keene.

open mutineers. Even Lord Canning, who was likewise trying to win back a revolted army with loud assurances uttered much too late, condemned the Agra manifesto as an untoward mistake. The Lieutenant-Governor was bidden to modify, if he could not wholly withdraw, a Circular which appeared to offer free pardon to red-handed wrong-doers. By the amended Circular, as worded in Calcutta, it was declared that such a pardon could not be extended to regiments guilty of violent outrage, of murder especially, or attempts to murder.*

In spite, however, of all official promises and threatenings, the rebellion spread and spread. Those red forerunners of evil, the cantonment fires, had already begun to make night troublous in Agra itself. By the end of May it was known that two companies of Sepoys quartered at Mathrá, twenty miles off on the Delhi road, had mutinied, shot an officer or two, and started away for the rebel headquarters, rich with the plunder of the civil treasury. Then at last the Lieutenant-Governor gave the order to disarm the two regiments to which the Mathra mutineers belonged. On the 1st of June they were disarmed accordingly by D'Oyley's gunners and the 3rd Europeans. A few days later the most of them had slipped away to join the village ruffians of the neighbouring districts, to stir up mutiny in Oudh, or to serve at Delhi under the Mohammadan flag. Meanwhile a body of mounted volunteers, raised from among the English dwelling in Agra and the refugees from the surrounding districts, kept watch about the cantonments, patrolled the city, and went forth at need on errands which called each man's vigilance, strength, and hardihood into frequent play.

NOTE.

That exquisite "dream in marble," the Táj-Mahal, was reared in the middle of the seventeenth century by Akbar's grandson, Shah Jahán, with the aid of Italian architects, in memory of his beloved and lovely Queen, Mumtáz-i-Mahal, the "Flower of the Palace." Rising from a marble terrace overlooking the Jamna, this mausoleum of white marble, with its tapering minarets, its softly-swelling dome, its delicate trellis-work, and gracefully-flowing mosaics, is unsurpassed, says Elphinstone, by any other building in Europe or Asia, "for the richness of the material, the chasteness of the design, and the effect at once brilliant and solemn." In the middle of a lofty hall under the dome is the tomb, surrounded by an open screen of marble relieved by mosaic work. The white marble walls are bordered with a running pattern of flowers in mosaic, wrought from many kinds of precious stones;

* Trotter.

and yet, says Heber, "though everything is finished like an ornament for a drawing-room chimney-piece, the general effect produced is rather solemn and impressive than gaudy." The Táj is seen to best advantage either from across the river, or else glistening softly by moonlight through the long dark avenue of cypresses which lead up from a noble gateway to its broad marble base.

The Fort itself, built by Akbar a little lower down the river, contains within its red sandstone walls many beautiful buildings of stone, marble, and inlaid work; notably the exquisite Moti Masjid or Pearl Mosque, with its graceful arcades and clustering domes. Within the city are one or two fine streets of stone-built houses, and one noble mosque, the *Jama Masjid*. The civil and military lines spread for some miles outside the city, along the Gwáliár road.

CHAPTER IV.

PROGRESS OF MUTINY.

From Agra south-eastward through Etawah passes the road to Cawnpore, a city and station lying on the right bank of the Ganges, about two hundred and seventy miles south-east from Delhi and six hundred and thirty north-west from Calcutta, as measured by the Grand Trunk Road of former days. In the time of Lord Wellesley, Cawnpore had been the great frontier post of the Bengal Army, but its old importance had gradually declined with the advance of our arms to the Satlaj and the Indus. The grain-boats passing along the Ganges, and the crowds of leather-workers in the bazaars, who drove a brisk trade in harness, saddlery, and cheap boots and shoes, still gave a certain air of liveliness to a place of no historical renown. In the wide cantonments that fringed the city three regiments of Sepoy foot and one of horse were quartered under the chief command of Sir Hugh Wheeler, a veteran of the Bengal Army who had made his mark in the Panjáb Campaign, and still carried his seventy years with the lightness of middle age.

Against these three thousand possible traitors in a cantonment nearly six miles long, filled with many families of English soldiers, merchants, tradesmen, pensioners, clerks, and officers civil and military, Wheeler had to count at first only on the services of about sixty European gunners, with a battery of six field-guns. Alive to the danger, he looked every way for help to meet it. Agra, with its stronger garrison, could not spare a man. From Lucknow, Sir H. Lawrence sent him all he dared—some eighty men from the 32nd Foot and two field-pieces under Lieutenant Ashe. Towards the end of May there also came in fifty men of the 84th Foot and fifteen of the Madras Fusiliers—all that Tucker and Ponsonby could then spare from the defence of Banáras. With the depôt of the 32nd Foot were about thirty invalids, who

might prove good for something at a pinch. Wheeler, however, might still hope much from the seeming quietude of his Sepoys, might still trust in the strength of his own influence, in the chance of timely aid from Calcutta, and in the steadfast loyalty of the Nána Sáhib, as pledged again and again to his confiding friend, Mr. Hillersden, the civil magistrate of Cawnpore.*

May passed in fear, in watchfulness, in wearying suspense, in preparations against the seeming danger. While the Sepoy regiments were slowly ripening towards mutiny, the anxious general was preparing a place of temporary refuge for his imperilled countrymen. For such a purpose the Magazine, which lay close to the river, with its walled defences surrounding an area of three acres, and its large store of warlike munitions, would have defied attack from any number of native troops. But Wheeler's hopes and fears alike dissuaded him from any movement which might precipitate the very rising he wanted to forestall, or at least to defer. In an evil hour for all concerned he and his chief officers picked out for intrenchment a piece of ground on which stood two large barracks of the old one-storeyed pattern, used as hospitals by the British regiments, which in other days Cawnpore had never lacked. Surrounded by a broad plain, a mile beyond which rolled the heat-shrunken river through its sandy shallows, the buildings overlooked the roads from city and cantonments to Allahábád. Within the intrenched space of about two hundred square yards were a few outhouses, and a well, guarded by a low parapet. Outside the intrenchment, on its left rear, ran a line of unfinished barracks. Within the fortified square were brought stores of grain and other necessaries, enough to last a thousand people about thirty days. Thither each night the women, children, invalids, civilians would crowd together for safety, guarded by a few soldiers; while the Sepoy officers still slept in their own lines, and Wheeler himself amidst his own family kept the doors and windows of his bungalow open all night, as our countrymen in the hot season are wont to do.†

All through May the Nána of Bithúr took care to keep his hellish purpose hidden from the eyes of his unsuspecting victims. When, on the 21st, an alarm of mutiny first drove the English families into sleeping in or near the intrenchment, he answered

* Kaye; Trotter; Mowbray Thompson's "Story of Cawnpore"; Sherer's Official Narrative.

† Trotter; Kaye. Brigadier Jack and some of the civil officers also slept in their own houses.

Wheeler's request for aid by sending a body of his own Maráthas to displace the Sepoy guard over the Civil Treasury and the jail adjoining it. Even in the first days of June, careworn men and fear-bewildered women still looked to the Nána Sáhib as their main tower of defence against all dangers. At length the long agony of doubt and waiting came to an unforeseen end. Before daylight on the 5th of June the 2nd Cavalry and the 1st Native Infantry marched off in open, but still bloodless, mutiny towards Nawábganj, where stood the Magazine already named. A few hours later the other regiments and a company of native gunners took the same course. Still, for the refugees now flocking into the intrenchment, no very alarming danger seemed near. The Sepoys who had just with all courtesy dismissed their white officers would surely be content to bear their arms and plunder away to the chief seat of mutiny and armed revolt on the Jamna; and, as for the Nána, had he not done all he could to prove his loyalty to his English friends in spite of all temptations to desert or betray them?

For some few hours, indeed, our people could breathe freely as men who knew and had survived the worst. The mutineers, having plundered the Treasury, had marched off to Kaliánpur in advance of the Rajah, who had just solemnly sworn to place himself at their head. He started after them, but not to lead them to a city where already reigned a sovereign of older lineage, of wider influence, and higher pretensions than his own. Spurred on by the revengeful counsels of Azimulla Khán, as well as the pleadings of his own ambition, he besought the mutineers to turn back and clear the Farangi dogs first of all out of their intrenchment. After some wavering they agreed to retrace their steps. Early the next morning a hostile letter from the Nána warned Sir H. Wheeler to prepare for the worst. A hurried summons went round to all yet tarrying outside the intrenchment. With the wild haste of people rushing from a house on fire, they flocked towards the place of refuge, little dreaming of all the misery yet to come.

A few minutes later might be heard the dim roar of an army marching along the road from Nawábganj. Erelong, as the different noises grew clearer, might be seen the dust of advancing columns mingled with the smoke of burning bungalows. Lieutenant Ashe, with a few volunteers, took out his guns to reconnoitre, but speedily returned with news of unmixed evil. A few minutes more, and the Nána's ominous array was spreading out in

front of the long, low earthen wall, which a pony might have leapt, and now two or three nine-pounder guns were pointing their muzzles against the frail barracks, where nearly a thousand men, women, and children had sought their only shelter from the cruel heat and still more cruel foe. At ten o'clock the first shot fired from one of these guns broke the leg of a native servant, one of the few still faithful to their masters, and sounded the alarm to four hundred Englishmen told off for the defence of that weak post. A struggle had begun to which, in default of timely succours from Allahábád, none of that lonely garrison could foresee an early or a prosperous end.*

Turn we again to Oudh, the province of which Cawnpore itself had once been a part. After his successful crushing of the mutiny of the 7th Irregulars on the 3rd of May, Sir Henry Lawrence did all that became so wise a ruler to guard against the dangers that still surrounded him. His eloquent speech on the 12th to a large gathering of officers civil and military, native as well as English, summoned to witness the bestowing of rewards on faithful Sepoys, seemed for the moment to pierce deep into the hearts of those to whom the Chief Commissioner appealed so earnestly in the language of their own country. But the impression of the moment, like breath on burnished steel, was too soon to fade away under the workings of an epidemic frenzy born of an atmosphere charged with moral poisons. When the sad tidings from Meerut and Delhi reached Lucknow, Sir Henry began to prepare himself for the worst. He telegraphed to Lord Canning for full powers civil and military over Oudh. Like his brother at Ráwal-Pindi, like Hearsey at Barrackpore and Sir Patrick Grant at Madras, he implored the Government to lose not an hour in summoning round to Calcutta the troops already embarking from England, Ceylon, and elsewhere for a war with China. Day by day he sent off telegrams fraught with wise counsel, brave assurances, and earnest prayers for the swift despatch by land or water, in batches however small, of Sikh, Gorkha, or English troops, not only to Lucknow, but to the still weaker garrisons of Cawnpore and Allahábád. Lord Canning thanked him warmly and without stint for his "invaluable" services, gave him all the powers he wanted, and even authorized him to "ask Jang Bahádur for his Gorkhas." While the Governor-General was making up his mind to disband the mutinous Oudh infantry, Sir Henry's courts-martial had

* Trotter; Kaye; Thompson.

already doomed forty-five of the ringleaders to imprisonment for various terms.

To keep guard over a great populous city on one side of the Gúmti and a wide cantonment on the other; to hold in check some five thousand native troops in whose loyalty he had ceased to trust, the Chief Commissioner had only one weak regiment, the 32nd Foot, and a small company of British gunners; the whole amounting to about seven hundred men. These by the 17th of May he had distributed with the guns among several posts, chief of which were the walled enclosure of the Residency, rising many-roofed above the domes and minarets of Lucknow, and beyond it, higher up the river, a tall castle-like stronghold, Machhi-Bhâwan or the Fish-Tower by name,* easy of defence against native troops. At every post a Sepoy garrison found itself watched or paralyzed by a smaller body of Europeans. If Sepoys guarded the treasury, British gunners had a battery planted within easy range. If a company of Oudh artillery was left in charge of its own battery, one English soldier stood sentry over each gun. Into the Residency and the Machhi-Bhâwan were brought stores of all needful kinds sufficient for a siege of several months. As the cantonment fires blazed oftener, as the tales and tokens of disaffection grew more alarming, the Residency received within its walls fresh parties of refugees from city and cantonments. Before the end of May hardly an English family remained outside the spot which, a few weeks later, was to become the last battle-ground of the British power in Oudh.†

Do what he might, however, and in such a need he had some able helpmates, Sir Henry could but stay, not wholly avert, the threatened explosion. Thus far he had succeeded in playing the regular Sepoys against the regulars, and in keeping the country tiet by precautions promptly planned and prudently carried out. Were Delhi speedily retaken, the old belief in the Company's *Ikbál* or destiny might still work marvels in our behalf. But the days went by, and people in Lucknow were asking in tones of hardly veiled defiance when Delhi would be retaken. At last, on the night of the 30th of May, the English in the Residency were startled to hear sounds of firing, and to see bungalow after bungalow in cantonments bursting into blaze. The Sepoys had risen. Foiled in their first rush upon the guns, whose watchful guardians at once met them with showers of grape, they spread over the wide station, burning,

* So called from the device upon the gateway.

† Trotter; Merivale; Kaye.

plundering, slaying as they went. Brigadier Handscombe was shot dead by the men to whose loyalty he had appealed. A subaltern of the 71st was dragged out from his hiding-place and bayonetted by his own Sepoys. A poor young cornet lying sick at the cavalry station of Múdkipur was murdered by the rebels in their retreat. Sir Henry himself with a few troops and guns barred the way into the city against the mutineers, and one native regiment, the 13th, rallied to the side of their white comrades. But of the remainder only two or three hundred still obeyed their officers' commands. Early the next morning a few rounds from our guns drove the mutineers out of the ruined station in headlong flight, quickened by the daring charges of the few troopers whom Lieutenant Hardinge and Martin Gubbins could lead into the thick of the rebel ranks. Some sixty Sepoys were taken prisoners; but the sun waxed hot, our men were tired out, and the most of the rebels made their way northwards into Rohilkhand.*

The troubles had begun in Oudh, and none knew what might happen next. On the 31st of May an European clerk was slain by Moslem fanatics in Lucknow, but the loyalty of the Oudh police soon quelled an outbreak which Sir Henry's forethought had prevented from happening the night before. Ill as he was, the Chief Commissioner spared no effort to avert disaster and to keep his subjects true to a doubtful cause. Many of the prisoners were hanged after short trial. He kept his Engineers employed in strengthening the defences of the Residency and the Machhi-Bhâwan. Wiser than Gubbins, he recalled most of the faithful Sepoys whom that brave but wilful functionary had in his hour of delegated authority dismissed to their homes.† But causes for anxiety multiplied daily. No posts came in from Cawnpore: no more telegrams were wired up from Calcutta. The flames of mutiny were spreading over Oudh. In the first days of June Captain Fletcher Hayes, an officer of high promise on Sir Henry's staff, was treacherously murdered near Mainpúri by the troopers who had been sent to aid him in clearing the road from Cawnpore to Aligarh. Two out of his three companions shared his fate. At Sitapur, on the northern frontier of Oudh, the 41st Sepoys having one day shown their loyalty by firing on the mutineers from Lucknow, rose on the next against their officers, slew every European they met, from Christian the Commissioner to the youngest child,

* Kaye; Merivale; Gubbins.

† For two days in June Lawrence made his duties over to a council headed by Martin Gubbins.

plundered the treasury, destroyed every house in the station, and set off to work fresh horrors in concert with the mutinous 10th at Fathigarh. Twenty-eight fugitives from Mohamdi were butchered by a party of the Oudh Irregulars. At Sultánpur on the Gumti, some way below Lucknow, the bold and well-beloved Colonel of Irregulars, Samuel Fisher, was shot down before his own troopers, some of whom, as he lay dying of that base blow, fell upon his second-in-command and laid him lifeless by his colonel's side. At Faizábád on the Gágra, near the old Hindu capital of Oudh, the 22nd Sepoys rose in mutiny, sacked the treasury, seized the guns, and plundered the cantonments. But in spite of the clamours of the Irregular Horse they shed no Christian blood. The officers and their families were sent down to the river, where they embarked in five or six small boats. Most of the civil residents had already found precarious shelter at Shahganj, the dwelling-place of a friendly Rajah, Mán Singh, who afterwards had them escorted safely to Dánápur. Less fortunate were the party in the boats. Waylaid thirty miles down the Gágra by the mutinous 17th from Azimgarh, many were shot, drowned, or cut to pieces; and very few of the survivors succeeded in running the gauntlet of prolonged hardships and unspeakable dangers awaiting them at every turn.*

The same sad tale of sudden treachery, of wanton bloodshed, of suffering, sharp, continuous, harrowing even to think of, comes up again and again during the month of June. In station after station, from Fathigarh on the western to Azimgarh on the south-eastern border of Oudh, rebellion under the guise of religion or patriotism was ready to wreak its worst on victims generally powerless either to fight or fly. Of the few who got clear from its first embraces some found their way betimes to Dánápur and Calcutta; while others, half dead with toil and hunger, reached Lucknow only to encounter the risks and hardships of a prolonged siege. A few, still less fortunate, were skulking about for months in perilous hiding-places, or, as hostages in the hands of treacherous foemen, were doomed to see their lives hanging daily on the turning of a hair. Here and there some friendly tálukdár or village, or a few faithful servants, gave timely help to wanderers flying from the clutches of Sepoys turned into savages by their fears. A party of runaways from Shahjahánpur were massacred near Mohamdi by the very escort who had just sworn the most sacred of Hindu oaths on the head of a Brahman, neither to hurt

* Kaye; Trotter; Merivale; Gubbins.

them nor to keep them prisoners. Captain Longueville Clarke, slayer in April of Fazl Ali, the robber-chief of Oudh, became in his turn a prey to the cruel treachery of those who had so zealously aided him in hunting down the outlawed murderer of an English magistrate. The bold Major Gall, having gone out disguised as a native Sowár or horseman with despatches for Allahábád, was slain by some mutineers with the connivance of his own men. By the middle of June every regiment save one in Oudh, regular and irregular, with most of the military police, had rallied to the insurrection in the name of the discrowned Wájid Ali, by that time a prisoner carefully guarded in Fort William.

Over the city of Lucknow itself the sway of the Farangi was still attested by the presence of British guards, by the daily ministering of the civil officers, by the frequent hanging of proven traitors on the gallows in front of the Machhi-Bháwan. Our troops still commanded the country for ten miles or so around the capital. But everywhere else rebellion and anarchy were getting the upper hand; and the number of avowed well-wishers to our rule in Oudh seemed lost in the multitude of those who either took up arms against the Government, or held aloof from a struggle in which so many of their own creed and kindred were prominently engaged. The panic born of the greased cartridges had begotten a fierce military revolt on the great recruiting-ground of the Bengal Army; and the revolt was daily fed by the sympathy or the active aid of those who panted for the brave old days of lawless rioting, or chafed under the loss of former privileges and of lands to which they could show no fair title; or who, like faithful clansmen, rallied at any cost to the side of their old feudal lords and malcontent countrymen against a rule at once alien, new, impartial, and all-pervading. It was glory enough for Sir Henry Lawrence, that with the help of one weak British regiment and a few civil officers he staved off the worst of the long-brooding mischief even to the end of that widely fatal June.

On the 14th of that month the flame of mutiny broke out at Gwáliár among the troops of the Gwáliár Contingent, some of whom had been lately helping to suppress revolt in the neighbourhood of Agra and Aligarh. The greater part of this force, over which its royal paymaster Sindhia had no direct control, had been recruited from Oudh and Rohilkhand, and its English officers too late discovered the folly of trusting to that broken reed, the loyalty of men drunk as it were with incurable delusions. In that year of trouble almost every officer, however distrustful of

other regiments, believed to the last moment in the general faithfulness of his own. To this belief Dr. Kirk, the chief surgeon at Gwáliár, Major Blake, and several other officers, slain by their own men, became a sacrifice on the night of the 14th of June. The mutineers spared no Englishman who crossed their path, and the whole station with its handsome church was soon a plundered and gutted ruin. But nearly all the women and children, some of whom had seen their fathers and husbands shot down in their presence, were allowed to find their way penniless, barefooted, half dead with hunger, heat, or sickness, to Agra, whither a few of the officers likewise made good their escape. When they had done their work of murder and pillage, the Sepoys placed themselves at Sindhia's orders, asking only to be led across the Chambal against their English foes. But the gallant young Mahárája, true to the teaching of his chief minister, Dinkar Ráo, to the experience gained by his recent visit to Calcutta, and to the parting advice of the Resident, Major Macpherson, contrived to keep his new followers from doing fresh mischief during the most critical months of that trying year.*

Along the southern border of the North-West Provinces stretches the smaller province of Bundalkand, ruled partly by its own princes, partly by officers of the Indian Government. Thanks mainly to the personal influence of a young "political," Willoughby Osborne of the Bengal Army, the Rajah of Réwa proclaimed himself from the first our friend, and placed his troops at various points commanding the roads from Banáras and Allahábád to Ságar and Jabalpur. In other parts of Bundalkhand, however, an evil wind was blowing against our countrymen. The town of Jhánsi on the western border was garrisoned by a wing of Irregular Horse, a wing of the 12th Sepoy infantry, and a company of native gunners. Down to the end of May no signs of imminent danger had warned the English residents to retire within the main fort, which offered ample means for a temporary defence. But here as elsewhere it was hardly possible to distinguish by outward signs the face of loyalty from that of silent treason. Besides other motives for revolt the Sepoys had long been assailed by agents of the Ráni, Lakshmi Bai, the late Rajah's widow, who had never forgiven the English for annexing the domains of her royal husband. Her resentment, inflamed by later grievances, such for instance as the partial stoppage of her pension in discharge of her husband's debts, now wrought with the growth of

* Kaye; Trotter.

Sepoy disaffection to bring about an issue as darkly tragical as the subsequent massacres at Cawnpore.

On the 5th of June a company of Sepoys marching without orders into the Star Fort frightened most of the English into the Town Fort, a stronghold far less capable of defence. Next morning on parade the native officers solemnly swore for themselves and their men to stand by their English comrades and neighbours, come what might. For the moment they may have meant what they said, for the Sepoys, like children, were given to frequent changes of mood. But that same afternoon beheld these faithful soldiers risen in merciless revolt. The Ráni and her friends had gone among them, and the fate of our countrymen was sealed. Nearly all the officers in cantonments were shot down, the jail-prisoners were set free, and the cantonments given up to wreck and plunder. For the surviving English there remained the shelter of the Town Fort and the chance of holding it until relief came. For two or three days the little garrison of about seventy souls, including nineteen women and twenty-three children, held out as they best could against the furious onsets of the Ráni's followers and allies, aided by native treachery within the ramparts. Their appeals for help the Ráni answered by slaying the messengers, or consigning them to sure death at Sepoy hands. Worn out at last with incessant watching, disheartened by frequent losses, and by the failure of all attempts to creep through the enemy's lines, with hunger staring them in the face, the hapless party, headed by the Commissioner, Major Skene, were glad enough to clutch at any chance of escape from otherwise certain doom. Life and safe-conduct to some other station were the terms on which they agreed to surrender, terms which the Ráni, troopers, artillerymen, and Sepoys all swore religiously to keep. Trusting in oaths which the natives of India commonly deem most binding, they came forth into a world of scowling faces and murder-planning hearts. In another minute they saw the utter hopelessness of their plight. Bound fast together, the men in one row, their wives and children in another, they had little time for vain remonstrances or regrets, not much for inward prayers. The sword, the bullet, and the bayonet sent them in quick succession to that wide haven where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.* Of all that party, not one escaped the common massacre. It was only from the statements afterwards furnished by native witnesses that a general outline of the tragedy thus enacted could be traced out.

* Kaye; Trotter; Malleson.

At Naugáon, a hundred miles south-eastward of Jhánsi, a like disaster was forestalled by the timely flight of our people, escorted by a company of faithful Sepoys, whose conduct here, as in so many other cases, stood out in bright relief from the surrounding treachery. Professions of the staunchest loyalty, earnest prayers to be led against the Delhi miscreants, a sudden change to open mutiny, violence, attempts at murder, followed by the usual incidents of a toilsome journey under a slaying sun, through a country infested with rebels and *dakaits*,—such is the short description of what happened between the 10th of June at Naugáon and the day when, a fortnight later, a few worn, ragged, half-starved wayfarers found rest and kindly welcome at Nagódh. Of the forty who had followed Major Kirke out of Naugáon cantonments, the greater number, including Kirke himself, perished by the way of wounds, sunstroke, disease, or utter weariness; and some of the rescued women and children owed their lives solely to the tender helpfulness of Captain Scot and Lieutenant Jackson, who, in the midst of their own sufferings, spared no effort to save the humblest of their fellow-travellers from imminent death. In the latter part of June the stream of fugitives to Nagódh was swelled by people of all classes, whom mutiny or the sense of growing danger had driven forth from Banda, Hamirpur, and other parts of Bundalkhand.*

On the high road from Calcutta to Cawnpore and Delhi, at the southernmost point of the Doáb, lies the city of Allahábád, still known to Hindus by its olden name of Práyág. Over the cantonments outside the city the month of June opened peacefully, if not without some causes for alarm. Within the walls of the half-modernized fortress, that still looks grandly down upon the meeting of the clear blue Jamna with the turbid yellow waters of the broad Ganges, four hundred Sikhs of Brasyer's Firózpur Regiment, aided by some sixty invalid soldiers from Chunár, a few staff sergeants and a hundred volunteers from the civil lines, kept guard on the 5th of June over two hundred women and children, and a company of the 6th Sepoys on duty at the main gate. The rest of this regiment were away in cantonments, all but two companies which had been sent with two guns of a native battery to guard the bridge of boats across the Ganges. A squadron of Oudh Horse were encamped near the fort. Until the 23rd of May, when Haselwood's invalids came up from Chunár, one of the strongest and most important posts in all India, which commanded the

* Kaye; Chambers; Trotter.

military roads into Bundalkhand, the North-West Provinces, Oudh, and Bengal, had lain at the mercy of false-hearted Purbias and doubtfully affected Sikhs. Happily for our countrymen, the former were somewhat slow to verify the forebodings felt by all around them save their own officers, while the latter, if not all untainted, might still on the morning of the 5th of June be deemed almost as trustworthy as their comrades in the Panjáb.

On that day, however, came from Banáras tidings of an outbreak, in which the Sikhs of the Lúdiána Regiment had suddenly joined the mutineers. That Neill's Fusiliers had routed the insurgents made small difference in the final outcome of the excitement thereby produced at Allahábád. The madness of despair provoked as many risings of our native soldiery as the wild elation of hope, and in many cases it is very hard to say which of these motives inspired the actual revolt. On the afternoon of the 6th, Colonel Simpson's Sepoys were drawn up on parade to hear the reading of Lord Canning's message, thanking them heartily for the zeal with which, a few days earlier, the whole regiment had volunteered to march against Delhi. A loud cheer from the men was presently followed up by a round of warm hand-shakings between the native officers and the English. This happened at the hour of sunset. About nine o'clock of the same evening, while the English officers were yet sitting at mess after their late dinner, exulting in the loud-voiced loyalty of their Sepoys, the sudden blast of an alarm bugle sent them trooping out to learn the meaning of it. In a few minutes most of them had learned it only too well. Nearly all that joyous company, which included seven or eight young Ensigns, still unposted, fresh from their English homes and schoolboy interests, were shot down in the lines, or butchered near the mess-house by the very men whose recent bearing had seemed to place their loyalty beyond all doubt. Two or three escaped through a storm of bullets into the Fort; and one of the young cadets, after several days of suffering from wounds and hunger and final captivity, reached the same shelter only to die. But the rest of those who had dined that evening at mess were slain outright, victims less of their own trustfulness than of the same easy-going system which had left Delhi and other strong or important places bare of European troops.

The mutiny of the troops on guard at the bridge of boats had given the first impulse to this murderous outbreak. The two guns which Harward had been ordered to take back to the Fort, they had insisted on carrying off to the cantonments. With the aid of

Alexander's Oudh Horse, Harward strove to frustrate their plans. The two Englishmen charged upon the guns, but only three or four troopers followed their lead. Alexander fell shot through the heart, and his comrade of the artillery had to save himself by swift flight. Over the broad cantonments the work of havoc soon went briskly forward. Every white man, woman, and child who crossed the path of the mutineers was put to death, happy if no act of needless savagery sharpened or prolonged their last agonies. Two or three officers besides those of the 6th were among the slain. Three of Simpson's officers on guard at the bridge gave their captors the slip, and saved themselves by swimming through the darkness across the river. When the sight of burning bungalows, and the yells of a raging mob of Sepoys and released convicts broke in at length upon the impressions which the sound of firing had at first conveyed to our people within the Fort, it dawned upon them with lurid clearness that the true cause of all that uproar was not the mutineers from Banáras, but the faithful Sepoys of Allahábád. The hurried, gasping words of an officer who presently rode in—it was Simpson himself, smeared with the blood of his dying charger—turned the growing conviction into certain knowledge.

With a promptitude worthy of the brave soldier who had won his commission by deeds of marked daring in the Satlaj campaign, Captain Brasyer at once fulfilled Colonel Simpson's orders by causing his Sikhs, some of them visibly reluctant, to disarm the company of Sepoys guarding the main gate. Had Brasyer been less firm, or his men more deeply disaffected, that moment might have scaled the doom of more places than Allahábád. But the Sikhs obeyed their commander, the invalids from Chunár stood ready for business beside their guns, the volunteers on the ramparts looked dangerous, and in a few minutes the Sepoy guard, relieved of their loaded muskets, were marching quietly out of the Fort.

Sated with blood and plunder, including the contents of a full treasury, most of the Sepoys took their way homewards into Oudh, or went to join the ranks of the insurgents at Cawnpore and Delhi. But a large rabble of soldiers, of convicts, of Mohammadan zealots from the city, of ruffians and riffraff from all the neighbourhood, for several days carried on their feast of plunder and destruction before the eyes of our countrymen shut up in the Fort. Outside that place of shelter chaos reigned for miles round. Every European shop and warehouse was sacked and wrecked; the telegraph wires were torn down and all the new railway works

and appliances destroyed, even to the engines, which the rebels battered to pieces with their guns. Many of the wealthier and more peaceful natives, especially the settlers and pilgrims from Bengal, were stripped of all their property, and barely escaped with their lives. A Mohammadan maulvi, named Liakat Ali, set up the green flag of his Prophet over the Kotwáli, or headquarters of the city police, and summoned the faithful to accept him as their Governor in the name of Delhi's newly restored king. Among his followers were not a few of the neighbouring land-holders, Hindu as well as Musalman, who had various reasons for joining any movement that might ensure the utter collapse of our rule. Meanwhile many an Englishman within the Fort was chafing under the forced inaction which laid so heavy a burden on his patience and his self-respect. Distrusting the Sikhs as heartily as he had once believed in his own Sepoys, Colonel Simpson allowed the former to go out freely in quest of plunder; but made no serious effort to grapple with the disorder and ruffianism outside. For four days was Simpson's garrison surrounded and defied by a swarm of miscreants, whom a few score volunteers, covered by the fire of the Fort guns, could have scattered before them in a few minutes. But on the fifth day a true leader of men, fresh from restoring order at Banáras, came to rescue his countrymen at Allahábád from the perils and perplexities that seemed to hem them round.*

That leader was Colonel James Neill, who had come over from Madras in command of the famous Madras Fusiliers. On the 23rd of May he had landed with his men at Calcutta.* At the age of forty-seven, after thirty years' service, he had yet to show the full strength of his prompt soldiership, his quiet heroism, and his commanding will. It was not long, however, before people began to realize what manner of man had appeared amongst them. At the Howrah terminus of the East Indian Railway Colonel Neill was waiting with a party of his Fusiliers for the rest of a detachment ordered to go by train to Rániganj. The station-master grew impatient at the unavoidable delay, and vowed that he would wait no longer for the missing men. As he walked away to fulfil his threat, Neill placed a guard of his own men over the driver and stoker of the train, bidding them to stir at their peril. Ten minutes later the train started with its full load of Fusiliers.†

From Rániganj the bold colonel sped onwards with a company of his own men to Banáras, the holy city of the Hindus, famed

* Kaye; Trotter. † Ibid.

for its wealth, its learning, its pilgrims, the turbulence of its citizens and the tameness of its Brahmani bulls; for the number of its mosques and pagodas, the stately beauty of the stone-built houses that line its narrow streets, the picturesque medley of temples, palaces and ghâts, or landing-stairs, that crowd each other for miles along the sloping crescent-shaped bank of the broad Ganges, overtopt by the tall minarets of Aurangzib's great mosque. During the month of May this great and populous city had been kept in order by the calm courage of Henry Tucker, the Commissioner, and the tireless energy of Frederic Gubbins, the Sessions Judge, whose unquailing spirit had enabled him almost single-handed to confront and quell in 1852 a dangerous rising of the citizens against a magistrate—for such he then was—eager to widen their thoroughfares, to sweeten and improve their undrained, unswept, ill-lighted streets. The awe then conceived for the fearless Englishman went far now to aid him and the magistrate, Mr. Lind, in their efforts to cope with the graver mischiefs that loomed ahead. While these two officers patrolled the city with a few *sowárs*, pressed the Banyas to lower the price of grain, and learned from faithful spies what the Sepoys in cantonments were saying or devising, the Commissioner himself went about with a cheerful countenance and a quiet fearless bearing that marked the strength, not only of his trust in God, but of his belief in the virtues of moral force as applied to "a parcel of children, which Sepoys and all natives are." To keep up the spirits of his own countrymen, and to remove from the native mind all likely causes of fear and discontent, was the policy which this simple-hearted Puritan steadily pursued. In concert with his civil colleagues he scouted all proposals for an early retreat to the fortress of Chunár. Of his own authority he instructed Brigadier Ponsonby to issue flour to his Sepoys at the normal rates. Although the English troops at Banáras consisted only of thirty artillerymen with three guns, he sent forward to Cawnpore and Lucknow all the reinforcements that came up from Calcutta. With manifest reluctance he agreed to Gubbins's request that the Europeans in Banáras, merchants, clerks, missionaries, college-teachers, and so forth, should be furnished with arms and ammunition. The Sikh Sardárs then living as state prisoners at Banáras all offered, but in vain, to form a body-guard for the Commissioner, who still rode out of an evening in strange attire, attended only by his daughter, and armed with nothing but a heavy-handled whip.*

* Kaye.

With his wonted readiness to prize true worth, Lord Canning himself declared in a letter to Gubbins, that the civil officers at Banáras had been playing a difficult game, thus far with complete success. With June, however, came cloudier skies and a more ominous horizon. The tide of revolt swept onwards, overwhelming Azimgarh, beating against Gházipúr, and surging daily nearer Banáras itself. At the last-named place, a hundred and fifty of the 10th Foot had just arrived from Dánápur. On the 3rd fresh succours reached the same goal in the shape of Neill and sixty of his Fusiliers. On the next afternoon, just as he was preparing to lead his small detachment off to Cawnpore, Neill learned that the treasure which Palliser's Irregulars were escorting down to Banáras had been plundered by the mutinous Sepoys and police of Azimgarh; the troopers of the escort caring only to save their officers' lives. From Azimgarh itself all the white people save two were allowed to escape unharmed to Gházipúr on the Ganges, about thirty miles below Banáras. Brigadier Ponsonby, a brave old cavalry officer, one of the two who, in November, 1840, had cut their way through Dost Mohammad's horsemen from the disastrous field of Parwandára, now saw the need of disarming his Sepoys, not at once indeed, but next morning. Neill, however, would hear of no delay. Before next morning the 37th Sepoys, long ripe for mutiny, might rise in fearful earnest, impelled by the news they would certainly have received from Azimgarh. Gubbins also, from what his spies had told him of the temper of the 37th, pleaded against delay; and Ponsonby agreed to adopt the prompter course. The word accordingly went round for a general parade at five o'clock that afternoon.

In the cantonment of Sikraul, about three miles from the city itself, lay the 13th Irregular Horse, the 37th Sepoy Infantry, and Gordon's Sikhs of the Lúdiána Regiment; mustering in all about two thousand men. Of all that number, the Sikhs alone and a few of the Irregulars were still accounted faithful. Two hundred and forty English soldiers with three guns were also, for the moment, under Ponsonby's command. At the hour appointed, Neill led his white troops forward on the right front of the 37th, while Gordon's Sikhs began marching down upon their left, a squadron of Irregulars bringing up the rear. As Neill's men drew nearer, flanked by Olpherts' guns, the dismayed Sepoys rushed to the bells of arms for their muskets and opened a steady fire upon their seeming assailants, several of whom were shot down. Our infantry took up the challenge, and Olpherts' guns plied

the Sepoys with showers of grape. Disabled by sunstroke, Ponsonby made over the chief command to Neill, who at once ordered a dash upon the Sepoy lines with his infantry, Sikh and British, moving on either flank of the guns.

Before the onset of the British foot and the deadly rush of grape-shot the Sepoys were soon driven from the shelter of their huts. Meanwhile, on the right of the guns there rose a strange alarm, a startling commotion. Less perhaps from wilful treachery than from a sudden panic caused by the cavalry behind them shooting at their white officers, Gordon's Sikhs halted, broke their ranks, and with loud cries fired some at their own officers, others at the battery on their left. A few rounds from Olpherts' wrathful gunners scattered them in final flight after more than one vain rush at the guns. By that time the Irregulars also had disappeared, and Neill's Europeans remained masters of the field. After firing the Sepoys' huts, Neill withdrew his little force into their barracks for that night.*

Meanwhile the firing in cantonments had alarmed the English in the civil lines. Most of them hurried off to the Mint, their appointed place of refuge, where a few of Neill's men guarded them from immediate danger. Others, flocking to the Court House, or hiding in their own houses, or in boats on the river, underwent an age of sharp anxiety before they, too, got safely escorted to the Mint. Many of the missionaries hurried off towards Chunár. At the treasury nothing but the bold front maintained by Gubbins and the suasive eloquence of his staunch friend Surat Singh, a Sikh Sardár and State-prisoner, held back the Sikh guard from carrying off the treasure, if not from taking yet worse revenge for their slaughtered comrades. From this post the treasure was removed next morning to a safer place, by a party of Neill's soldiers; but the Sikhs, who there and elsewhere stood faithful, were promptly rewarded by Tucker's order with liberal handfuls of the money they might have seized for themselves. In the city itself a Hindu noble, Ráo Deonarain Singh, and a Brahman Pandit, Gokul Chand, used all their influence with marked success to maintain order among their countrymen, while the Rajah of Banáras gave timely help to the missionaries passing through Rámnagar. A faithful few of the 13th Irregulars were presently doing good service under Palliser and the bold indigo-planter Chapman, towards quelling disorder in the surrounding districts.

* Kaye; Trotter.

Amidst the ensuing disturbances outside, while rapine and murder held their revels in the neighbouring villages, the great city of Banáras kept quiet, overawed by the spell of Neill's timely daring, of Gubbins's unfailing energy, and the approach of fresh troops from below. The plotters of revolt and massacre had been forestalled by a few hours. The houses in cantonments, though for some days mostly tenantless, remained unharmed. The city jails still held their prisoners fast. Parties of soldiers and volunteers scoured the neighbouring country, and three rows of gibbets set up in several parts of the city were continually fed with wretches convicted on the shortest trial by martial law of having done or plotted evil against the rulers of the realm. The latent savagery of the civilized man broke through the crust of modern culture, and burst the bonds of a creed which had taught for centuries the loveliness of peace and goodwill amongst men. Parties of volunteers went out into the district in quest of criminals, real or fancied, who were hanged without ceremony on the nearest tree; one of their judges playing the part of hangman with a relish which he seldom cared to conceal. One amateur Calcraft boasted of the numbers whom he had strung up quite artistically by batches at a time, "in the form of a figure of eight." Mere boys were doomed to death by a military court for playing at rebellion—in plain words, for beating tom-toms and flaunting rebel colours in the streets. The gallows and the lash were freely used against a crowd of wretches for whom no more room could be found in the jails. Fine ladies and pious clergymen exulted over the worst excesses of that wild justice, a recourse to which nothing but the urgent need of the moment could excuse.*

On the 5th of June, the day after the Banáras outbreak, some of the fugitive mutineers were reported in the neighbourhood of Jaunpur, a small station on the Gúmti, about forty miles to the north of Banáras. In the first flush of loyal feeling, the few companies of Gordon's Sikhs there quartered, shook hands with the English residents assembled for common defence within the treasury. In less than an hour, under the excitement caused by the news from Banáras, they were shooting down their own commander, plundering the treasury, and cowing their late friends into an ignominious flight. Stript of their arms, and exposed to every form of insult, the fugitives fell at last into the kindly keeping of Hingan Lál, a native gentleman, who lodged and fed them for several days, pending the arrival of an armed escort sent out from

* Kaye; Trotter.

Banáras to their help. For several weeks thereafter, only the blackened ruins of a few bungalows remained to tell of the rule which for eighty years past had sat so lightly on the fields and villages of Jaunpur.*

Leaving to other hands the task of maintaining order in Banáras, Colonel Neill on the 9th of June set off with forty of his Fusiliers for Allahábád, where the services of such a leader were sorely needed. Another detachment started at the same time by the slower bullock-train. After much ado for want of horses and other aids to progress through a deserted country, he reached Allahábád on the afternoon of the 11th. "Thank God, sir; you'll save us yet!" was the greeting of the sentry who let him into the fort. In pursuance of Canning's orders, Neill at once took command of the garrison. So prostrated by the heat and prolonged exertion that he could only sit up for a few minutes together, he began early the next morning to put a new face on things around him. That same day the rebels, who had lately been investing the fort, were cleared out of the river suburb of Daryáo-Ganj. The boat-bridge over the Ganges was retaken, repaired, and entrusted to a guard of Brasyer's Sikhs. A way thus opened for the safe approach of a hundred more Fusiliers under Major Stevenson, Neill proceeded on the 13th to clear the left bank of the Jamna by driving the enemy out of Kydganj. His next task was to clear the Sikhs out of the fort, where his Europeans were getting helplessly drunken with the liquor which their swarthy comrades and the volunteers had plundered from the warehouses of friends and foes outside. He bought up or destroyed all the liquor that could be found. The Sikhs, who were harder to manage, were then with Brasyer's help coaxed out of their old quarters by promises or hints of pillage yet to come; and when the last of their sentries had left the fort, Neill, for the first time, felt that "Allahábád was really safe."†

Brought back perforce to sober and disciplined ways, both Sikhs and English fought manfully thenceforward with evergrowing success. The surrounding villages were soon cleared: as more troops came up from Banáras, Neill found himself strong enough to drive the last batch of rebels out of the city itself, where, on the 17th, Court, the magistrate, once more placed his own underlings and set up the symbols of British rule amidst

* In 1775 the district of Jaunpur had been ceded to the Company by Asaf-ud-daula, the new Nawáb-Vázir of Oudh.

† Kaye; Trotter.

empty houses and silent streets. So mighty was the dread of our vengeance that the people of the city had nearly all followed the insurgents in their flight elsewhither. Not content with securing the city, Neill sent small bodies of troops in armed steamers up the river to circumvent the villages beyond his own reach. In spite of the fierce heat, his brave soldiers, some of them artillery invalids, proved equal to every task, until about the 18th they began falling fast before a burst of cholera, which in two or three days slew forty out of a hundred attacked. To disarm, to get rid of so dreadful a visitor, no effort that Neill could think of was left untried. Two steamer-loads of women and children had already been forwarded down the Ganges to Calcutta; and the troops were now spread in detachments about the station, while the non-combatants got gradually shifted out of the fort. Of medicines, of commissariat stores, of barrack comforts, of Pankah coolies and hospital servants there was great lack; and the absence of the monsoon rains heightened the suffering caused by the fearful heat. But the soldiers were not crowded; their spirits were good, and the sick lay in airy quarters, compared at least with those they had left behind.*

Erelong the plague ceased as suddenly as it had begun. Rain, stores, and carriage were all that Neill yet wanted to ensure him a fair start for Cawnpore, whence tidings vague and contradictory, but not on the whole alarming, trickled in from time to time. His eager soul chafed at delays which even his energy could not soon override, at blunders which all his foresight could not prevent. Under his own eye, however, all worked with a will. Cowed by the frequent hangings of convicted rebels,—for martial law was now in full swing,—by the bold but merciless onslaughts of Neill's soldiers, and by the steady flow of fresh troops up from Banáras, the least friendly of the natives that remained in or around the city were soon helping their twice-proven masters to get themselves equipped for their next move forwards. Nor was Neill's energy relaxed for a moment by the news that another officer was coming up to reap the harvest of his sowing; that he who had thus far pioneered the way to victory must shortly give place to a rival marked out for that end, not by his past services, however great, but rather by the accident of his higher rank and timely appearance in Calcutta. On the last day of June, Brigadier General Havelock reached Allahábád, armed with a special commission from the Government to command the troops advanc-

* Kaye; Trotter.

ing to the relief of Cawnpore and Lucknow. He had come round from Madras to Calcutta in the same steamer with Sir Patrick Grant, the new Commander-in-Chief, at whose suggestion Lord Canning had selected him to continue the good work begun by Neill. After forty years of zealous and varied service, from which he had reaped more honour than worldly advancement, Havelock's opportunity was come at last. With the eagerness of a thorough soldier, sharpened by the strength of his religious zeal, he hastened up the country, followed more slowly by the 64th Foot and the 78th Highlanders, fresh from good service in the Persian War. At Allahábád he was just in time to see Neill's trusty lieutenant, Major Renaud, leading forth on the Cawnpore road a little column of 400 Fusiliers, 300 Sikhs, 120 Irregular Horse, and two nine-pounder guns, manned by invalid gunners from Chunár.

This was the van of a larger force which Neill had gotten all but ready to follow in two or three days. About the same time a steamer carrying a hundred Fusiliers and two guns was to start up the river in aid of Renaud's advance. But the time for succouring Wheeler's garrison at Cawnpore was already past. Events had happened there which compelled Havelock to stay Renaud in mid-course, and to halt himself for some days longer at Allahábád.*

* Kaye; Trotter; Marshman's "Havelock."

CHAPTER V.

FROM CALCUTTA TO CAWNPORE.

All through April and half of May a general stillness—fit prelude to the coming hurricane—had pervaded the capital of British India. Mischief, as we have seen, was brewing everywhere; but the great men of Calcutta, lapt in the languor of a tropical summer, and immersed in their own official duties, mistook the faint sounds that sometimes reached their ears for the last rumblings of a storm blown over. In trying to keep clear of undue haste and harshness, Lord Canning and his Council acted as if treacle and laudanum, sparingly administered, were the best medicines for a dangerous fever. It took them five weeks to decide upon disbanding the mutinous 34th. The veteran Hearsey, whose prompt courage had made up for the helpless apathy of Colonel Wheler and the treachery, active or passive, of his men, was mildly rebuked for having openly ascribed to religious frenzy the murderous attack of a drug-maddened Sepoy on his own adjutant. Against Hearsey's shrewder counsel, the thirty-six Sepoys of the 63rd, who had mutinously conspired to reject their furloughs, because the Barrackpore regiments were going to do likewise, received full pardon for their offence, with free leave to take what they had just rejected. No heed was paid to Hearsey's repeated warnings against the hazard of leaving Barrackpore unguarded by English troops. What mattered it that fires lighted by unknown hands were blazing almost nightly in many an Indian station; that mysterious chapáthis were being handed on from place to place; that Mohammadan troopers at Meerut were yet more refractory than cow-worshipping Brahmans at Barrackpore; that the whole air was heavy with warning signs of the explosion which Hearsey had predicted as far back as the middle of February! By the end of April all things were looking quite pleasant to the resolute lotus-eaters of the Supreme Council. On the very morning after the Meerut massacre, the 84th Foot, which a few weeks earlier had

been hurried off to Calcutta at the prayer of an anxious Government, was actually under orders to re-embark for Rangoon.

By the middle of May, however, Government House was shocked into healthier action by the tidings telegraphed from Agra. The tragedy first dimly outlined in the messages of the 11th and 12th took clearer, deadlier shape in those of the three following days. Lord Canning bestirred himself to deal somewhat vigorously with the immediate peril. Happily for India, long lines of telegraph, one of the boons bestowed upon her by Dalhousie, already covered the great peninsula with a magical network of colloquial arteries and veins. If those around Delhi and Meerut were disabled, free speech was still exchangeable over the vast remainder. For many days to come the telegraph workers had enough to do. In all directions short pithy sentences of command, entreaty, narrative, question and answer, were flashed with tireless frequency over many hundred miles of wire at a time. Now Mr. John Colvin asks for leave to proclaim martial law around Meerut, or suggests that the troops returning from Persia be straightway summoned to Bengal. Anon Lord Canning begs Sir John Lawrence to place a regiment of Irregular Horse at Colvin's disposal, or requests Lord Harris, the Governor of Madras, to hold two regiments of British foot ready for despatch, in case of need, to Calcutta; or desires the officers commanding at Cawnpore and Meerut to keep the Government informed by frequent messages of all that happens in their several districts. On the 16th of May, the same day on which Sir H. Lawrence had urged Lord Canning to "get every European he can from China, Ceylon, and elsewhere," the Governor-General sent off three telegrams, one acquainting Lord Elphinstone at Bombay with Bengal's urgent need for two of the British regiments coming back from Persia; another bidding General Anson to make all possible haste in retaking Delhi, a third begging Sir John Lawrence through Mr. Colvin to send down towards Delhi "such of the Panjáb and European regiments as he can safely spare." Three days later Lord Harris was able to announce the starting of the *Zenobia* from Madras for Calcutta with the bulk of Neill's Fusiliers on board.*

On the 14th the Governor-General had made up his slow mind to countermand the arrangements, then half completed, for the return of the 84th Foot to Rangoon. By the steamer which would else have taken them back he sent off an urgent message for fresh reinforcements in the shape of the 35th Foot, then quartered at

* Trotter; Parliamentary Papers.

Rangoon and Maulmain. As a last effort to stay the course of a headlong mutiny, he issued a proclamation warning the Bengal Army against the falsehoods spread among them by evil-minded plotters, and solemnly assuring them that the Government neither had done nor would ever do aught to meddle with the free enjoyment of their religion or their caste. Large powers were delegated by Lord Canning to the two Lawrences, and the Lieutenant-Governor of Agra received warm thanks for his recent services, with ungrudging promises of future support. To officers commanding divisions, brigades, or stations, and to civil officers of a certain rank Lord Canning's Government presently gave power to assemble courts-martial, to confirm and carry out their sentences on the spot, to grant certain rewards at their own option to native soldiers and petty officers conspicuous for deeds of "eminent gallantry, loyalty, and good conduct."* Meanwhile, on the 17th of May, Lord Elphinstone begged Mr. Bartle Frere, the able Commissioner of Sind, to despatch the 1st Bombay Fusiliers with all speed from Karáchi to Lahór. On the 19th the homeward mail-steamer left Garden Reach with a messenger on board, whose errand was to bring up all available troops from Ceylon. By the sam mail went forth urgent letters from Canning to Lord Elgin and General Ashburnham, praying for speedy help from the force then gathering for the Chinese war. There was no time to lose, said the Governor-General to the British envoy, whom the first appeals for succour found at Singapore. The Chinese war might keep, was the burden of his letters, while every day that India had to wait for the help so sorely needed would add to the dangers and difficulties that beset her path.†

Means of carriage by land and water for the troops going up the country were sought after by the Indian Government with more perhaps of diligence than success. On the 20th of May the first batch of twenty-one men from the 84th Foot left Ránigani in one-horse carriages, like palankeens on wheels, for Banáras and Cawnpore. Had the railway been open only as far as Banáras the worst disasters of June and July would almost certainly have been forestalled. As things were, the river steamers had to creep like tortoises up many hundred miles of winding shallows, while all the carriages plying on the Grand Trunk Road to the north-west could take up amongst them only twenty-one soldiers a day. At

* The Act conferring these powers of summary trial and punishment passed through Council on the 30th May, and received Canning's assent on the 8th June.

† Trotter; Kaye; Walrond's "Lord Elgin."

this rate of travelling May was nearly over before a single company of the 84th had reached Cawnpore. Precious days were lost before one detachment started from Calcutta, and days yet more precious were lost upon the road, partly perhaps from inevitable causes, but partly also from lack of energy, foresight, and firm will, whether in Lord Canning himself or in those who carried his purposes into effect.

To many of our countrymen in India it seemed incredible that results so pitifully small for such a crisis should be the best that a strong Government, in practice nearly despotic, could bring to pass. As the Governor-General himself allowed, there was no telling what an hour might bring forth, how many regiments were ripe to rise, when or where the next explosion might occur. It was no time for standing on every-day forms, on shows and decencies, which Canning himself a little later was ready enough to discard. Yet with a whole British regiment at Dánápur, with two more about Calcutta, with a railway as far as Rániganj, with a large city on the Húghli full of all civilized appliances, with a high road running through broad tracts of rich, well-peopled country, with thousands of white men ready to bear arms in their own defence, it was deemed no small achievement to have pushed some eighty soldiers up to Cawnpore before the 1st of June. Hindrances great and many no doubt there were—in the heat, the distance, the suddenness of the occasion, the scarcity of carriage, of cattle, of food for numbers at a time, and the danger of leaving important stations too weak against possible surprise. But to men of true forecasting energy what were these but so many spurs to yet bolder and more determined efforts? Had the Sepoys at Dánápur been disarmed in the middle of May, a wing of the 10th Foot would have been set free for timely service at Allahábád and Cawnpore. A like medicine applied without delay to the Barrackpore regiments would have enabled half at least of the 84th to reach Banáras before the end of May. A Lawrence or a Gubbins would have made short work of those other difficulties which hindered the Bengal Government from doing its duty at the rate of more than twenty soldiers a day. It is only fair to suppose that moderate pressure, of a kind by no means strange to our civil officers in India, could have found carriage enough for the swift despatch up-country of at least a hundred soldiers at a time.*

A quick eye for discerning the dangers ahead ought, we think,

* Trotter; Malleson; Norton's "Topics for Indian Statesmen."

to have urged the Indian Government to begin collecting its reinforcements as soon as tidings of the first overt mutiny in Oudh reached Calcutta on the 4th May. But the Governor-General was by nature slow to move out of his regular orbit. Not till the middle of May, when he knew of the massacres at Meerut and Delhi, did he think of sending for troops from Southern India and the Eastern Seas. His letters to England still contained no pressing demands for help, while they warned the Home Government against listening to alarmist tales from Calcutta. His rejection on the 17th of May of Lord Elphinstone's shrewd offer to despatch from Bombay a steamer which might overtake the regular mail, at any rate the French steamer of the 7th June from Alexandria, delayed by a fortnight the arrival in England of news which it behoved our statesmen to know and act upon at the earliest possible date. With like slowness of sight or movement did Lord Canning a few days later reject the proffered services of his Nipálese ally, Jang Bahádur, and of all the loyal citizens, English, American, French, Armenian, and native, in Calcutta itself. The French of Chandanagar met with the same rebuff. In reply to the offers of his own countrymen the Governor-General made light of the dangers they justly feared, rebuked them for arraigning the good faith of a whole army, and invited them to serve as special constables, whereas they had clearly wanted him to make them useful as armed volunteers. A few days' training would have turned many hundred able-bodied sailors, clerks, and tradesmen into serviceable makeshifts for regular troops. Other of the petitioners were calmly assured that all was quiet on the 25th of May within six hundred miles of the capital, and that in a few days the mutiny would no doubt be utterly suppressed, the country everywhere made tranquil, and the leaders in a wicked rebellion given over to condign punishment. Three weeks later Lord Canning was but too glad to obtain from Calcutta and Nipál the help, which, accepted at the right moment, might have saved many an English life in Oudh and the Upper Provinces.*

For the time, however, things in Bengal Proper looked comparatively calm. In the last week of May the Mohammadans of Calcutta followed the lead of their Hindu fellow-citizens by a public expression of their trust in the good faith of Government, and of their readiness to fight for it, should need arise. On the 27th Lord Canning rode down to Barrackpore to thank the Sepoys of the 70th for their zeal in volunteering to march forthwith

* Trotter; Malleson; Meade's "Sepoy Revolt."

against their traitorous comrades at Delhi. Four days earlier the English in Calcutta had been cheered by the landing of Neill and his Fusiliers from Madras. All was reported quiet at Dákha, Chittagaon, and Bahrampur. In the rich indigo-fields of Bahár the planters still dwelt at peace on their own estates, trusting in the loyalty of the neighbouring Zamindárs, and hoping much from the precautions taken by Mr. William Tayler to keep the great city of Patna, the headquarters of Wahábi fanaticism, under firm control. Nor had any signs of disaffection among the Sepoys at the neighbouring station of Dánápur as yet revealed themselves, either to their own colonels or to General Lloyd.*

In the early part of June Sir Patrick Grant, Gough's old Adjutant-General, was summoned from the chief command of Madras to act in the room of the late General Anson as Commander-in-Chief for Bengal. About the same time the first of the regiments sent round from Bombay, the 64th Foot, landed in Calcutta. A few days later came the 78th Highlanders, followed anon by the 35th Foot from Rangoon. The stream of succours for Banáras and the Upper Provinces began to flow more freely than heretofore. By horse-carriage, bullock-train, and steamer, the troops erclong were travelling upwards from Rániganj at the rate of fifty, sixty, even a hundred men a day. Too late to save Cawnpore or to avert disaster from Oudh, they served at least to restore order about Allahábád, to plant England's colours once more above the Cawnpore shambles, and to rescue from imminent destruction the hard-pressed garrison of Lucknow.

By the middle of June Calcutta knew that its worst fears were being fulfilled, that the mutiny was spreading fast and far, that the making short work with Delhi was a vain dream, that things were going wrong with Sir H. Wheeler, if not with Sir H. Lawrence also. With an ignorance shared at the time by more competent judges, Lord Canning on the last day of May had telegraphed through Agra an urgent message to Sir Henry Barnard begging him, since his force of artillery would soon make sure of Delhi, to detach some horse and foot with all speed southwards for the recovery of Aligarh and the relief of Cawnpore. A few days earlier he had written home to the Court of Directors on the expediency of adding three European regiments to the strength of the Company's Bengal Army, as if no troops were specially needed from England for his immediate use. By the 12th of June, however, he had begun to see that the taking of Delhi

* Trotter; Chambers; Kaye.

was a question no longer of days, but perhaps of many weeks, and that Cawnpore and Lucknow must look for help to Bengal alone. On that day he virtually owned to his error of the month before, by inviting the residents in Calcutta to enrol themselves "either as horsemen or on foot" in the newly-created corps of Volunteer Guards. Forgetful of former snubbings, the lawyers, merchants, tradesmen, sailors, and clerks of European or Eurasian blood, readily came forward to prepare themselves for the work so tardily entrusted to their hands; nor was it long before they were winning high praise from experienced judges for the manner in which that work was done.*

Had the enrolment begun even a fortnight earlier, Calcutta might not have witnessed the unseemly panic of the memorable 14th of June. For some days past there had been great uneasiness among the English at Barrackpore. Although each of the regiments there quartered had volunteered in its turn to go up against Delhi, and the 70th were on the eve of starting, the value of their professions grew more and more doubtful every day. At length, on the 13th of June, General Hearsey found something in the temper of his Sepoys so threatening, that he sent off to Calcutta an urgent message for leave to disarm them all. Lord Canning gave his sanction without his approval to an appeal which he felt himself unable to resist. The Highlanders from Chinsura, and the 35th Foot from Calcutta, were ordered off that evening to Barrackpore. At sundown of the 14th the whole of the Sepoy brigade were disarmed under the persuasive ministry of two British regiments and a row of heavy guns. About the same hour the native guards in Fort William and Calcutta were quietly relieved of the weapons which, by all accounts, might soon have been doing mischief in the name of the deposed King of Oudh. Early the next morning that weak-minded prince and his plotting counsellor, Ali Nakhi Khán, with three other courtiers of rank, were borne away from the palace at Garden Reach to brood over their wrongs or their ill-luck within the guarded circle of Fort William.

The disarming took place on a Sunday—"Panic Sunday," as it was afterwards called, in memory of the causeless terror which that day seized upon the people in Calcutta. On that day the Barrackpore troops were said to be marching upon the capital of India, the natives of which, aided by the followers of Wájid Ali, were to rise that night in a body and murder the whole of their

* Trotter; Kaye; Norton; Malleson.

five thousand Christian neighbours in their beds. These and other rumours, not more groundless than absurd, found swift credence even with some who ought to have feigned the confidence and the courage they might not feel. Several officers, civil and military, took part in a mad rush of scared men and women, chiefly of the humbler class,* into the hotels, on board the shipping, inside the fort walls, anywhither out of reach of the rumoured danger; while the less timid barricaded their doors, or paraded the main thoroughfares armed to the teeth against an imaginary foe. Under the goadings of a panic dread, men seemed to forget that British soldiers held the Fort and barred the approach from Barrackpore; that any show of fear or weakness could but embolden the disaffected; that of all places on that side of India Calcutta was then the safest, alike by natural position, by the strength of its European element, and by the vast number of natives whose well-being was closely bound up with that of their white-skinned neighbours and protectors. That Sunday evening the churches, the city suburbs, many of the great Chowringhie palaces, and the Mall itself where all Calcutta thronged daily for the cool sunset air along the river, were nearly emptied of their usual occupants. That night a few score of bold ruffians might have sacked any number of deserted houses in the great commercial capital of British India.†

Amidst the general excitement and confusion of that afternoon Lord Canning maintained a coolness which some of his colleagues and subalterns must have envied. While many of those around him were looking after their own safety, or waiting anxiously for reassuring news from Barrackpore, he went calmly through his accustomed work, exchanging messages from time to time with General Hearsey, and giving orders about next morning's business at Garden Reach. As if in scorn of the panic outside, he refused to deprive his own native Body-Guard of their arms.

One piece of boldness on his part indeed few of the English in India could bring themselves to admire. Only the day before the great stampede he had passed through Council the famous "Gagging Act," which placed the whole Indian press, English as well as native, under a penal despotism surpassing that which Louis Napoleon had a few years before set up in France. In less than one hour was carried through all its stages a measure apply-

* "Crannie," properly Karáni, was the name given to the clerks in public and private offices. They were mostly half-castes.

† Malleson; Kaye; Trotter.

ing to all newspapers alike the remedy which, but a fortnight before, Lord Canning had accounted "worse than the disease" of sedition then traceable in the language of the Native press. Not a voice was raised in the Calcutta council-room against a measure which empowered the Government in each province to suppress at will, by a formal notice in the *Gazette*, any print which published matter injurious to the interests of the State. Mr. Barnes Peacocke, Law-Member of Canning's Council, and two judges of the Supreme Court, one of them the independent Sir Arthur Buller, concurred in passing a law which its framers justified not only by the demands of public safety, but on the specious plea of equal justice to both divisions of the press. Lord Canning declared it "impossible to draw a line of demarcation between the two;" as if his own countrymen needed such a damper to their loyalty at a time when all the forces, moral and physical, at their command might prove unequal to the work cut out for them. On the same hard-and-fast principle the process of disarming should have been applied to Native and English regiments alike. There might be reasons at such a crisis for muzzling the Native press; but what, asked many of Canning's countrymen, had our English journalists done to deserve classing with the swarm of petty scribblers who prayed success to our enemies at Delhi and elsewhere? Could it be that the outspoken language of the former during the past six weeks had provoked the Government whose policy they arraigned to adopt this method of shutting their mouths thenceforward—at least for a whole year? Charges of this sort are always easier to make than to make good, and Canning may have been sincere in holding that English journalists could do as much harm by indiscreet comments and misleading news, as their native rivals did by open or indirect appeals to the political and religious passions of their readers. It appears, moreover, that against white offenders the new law was seldom brought to bear. But in making an enemy of the Calcutta press the Governor-General lost the services of a willing helpmate, and involved himself in a storm of obloquy which was to rage around him for many months to come.*

By the 16th of June it was known that one man's determined courage had quenched at Rohni in the Sánthál district a mutiny which might else have spread to other parts of Western Bengal. His adjutant suddenly cut down, himself and the surgeon badly wounded on the 12th by a few ruffians from his own regiment, the

* Kaye; Malleson; Trotter.

5th Irregular Horse, Major Macdonald showed himself worthy of the command bestowed on him by Sir C. Napier in reward for the presence of mind which, in 1850, had saved Govindgarh from the grasp of the mutinous 66th. Betrayed erelong by a comrade, the three murderers of Sir Norman Leslie were brought out on the 16th to undergo their just doom in sight of a regiment nearly all tainted with the mutinous spirit. In spite of his wounds and a scalped skull, Macdonald appeared on parade to see justice done at all hazards, against appalling odds. One of the doomed men called loudly on his comrades to save him from the gallows. In another moment they might have answered his call; but a pistol at the man's ear and a threat of instant death brought his outcries to a sudden stop. The next moment a noose was round his neck, the elephant on which he sat then walked from under him, and the wretch was left dangling in mid-air. His two accomplices were soon hanging beside him, and the rest of the troopers quietly moved off to their own lines, not more amazed at the fruits of Macdonald's boldness than was he himself to find "his head still upon his shoulders."*

On the day after this deed of daring Sir P. Grant arrived in Calcutta, and took up his abode at Government House, as the spot then deemed most suitable for conducting the general business of his department. Of what was there done by Lord Gough's whilom adjutant history has little enough to say. His well-meant appeal to his old comrades of the Bengal Army failed to keep one rebel true to his salt, and Calcutta was hardly the place where a brave old officer could hope to win new distinction at a time when the services of every fighting man were imperatively needed elsewhere. To Sir Patrick, however, belongs the credit of securing for his recent shipmate and old companion in arms, Henry Havelock, the post of special honour and danger in the front. On the 23rd of June, in the midst of another small panic at the capital, Havelock started up country on the glorious errand from which he was fated never to return.

Meanwhile the able and keen-witted Commissioner of Bahár was doing all that a brave man could to keep the peace of a large province and a great city full of Mohammadans, with no other help than his native policemen, a few English magistrates and railway servants, and a few companies of Rattray's Sikhs. In Patna itself, in the adjacent districts, in the military station of Dúnápur, eight miles from Patna, Mr. William Tayler knew that

* Kaye; Malleson; Trotter.

disaffection was rife; but General Lloyd would not listen to any scheme for disarming his trusted Sepoys. The Government agreed with Lloyd, and Tayler had to provide for the public safety under conditions which left him small hope of ultimate success.

In the face of such discouragements the Commissioner continued to do his best. On the 19th of June he summoned the leading citizens of Patna to a conference at his own house. When it was over, three of the Maulvis who attended it, men of whose plottings he had sufficient knowledge, were quietly handed over to the safe keeping of a Sikh guard. On the following day another Maulvi was arrested, and an order issued requiring the citizens to give up their arms, and to stay within their homes after nine o'clock at night. On the 3rd of July, Pir Ali, a Musalman bookseller, led a rising in the city, which a body of Rattray's Sikhs had no difficulty in putting down. Pir Ali himself and thirty other ringleaders were soon brought to trial, and sixteen of the worst offenders were duly hanged. For three weeks longer a fair show of order was maintained throughout Bahár.*

On the afternoon of the 7th of July, Havelock's main column marched out of Allahábád, not now to relieve, but to avenge the murdered garrison of Cawnpore. It was believed in camp that all had perished in a common butchery, nor was the exact truth discovered for many days to come. Thanks to the information afterwards gathered from more than one witness who escaped as by a miracle the common doom, the main incidents of that prolonged tragedy stand out in all the clearness of historic fact. For three weeks, from the 6th to the 27th of June Sir Hugh Wheeler and his helpless crowd of men, women, and children lay weltering in a sea of blackest horror, of cruelly protracted suffering. Two frail one-storeyed barracks, one thatched with straw, which very soon caught fire from the enemy's shot, formed erelong the only shelter of some four hundred women and children and sick or weakly men, not to speak of their native attendants; while about as many men able to bear arms had commonly to crouch as they best could behind the low breastwork which, with its girdling trench, was all that parted them from the swarms of merciless foes outside. Eleven guns, mostly of large calibre, and three mortars, kept raining into the intrenchment a never-ceasing fire, which Wheeler's men could only answer from eight field-pieces that stood here and there in large gaps of the intrenched line,

* Malleson; Kaye.

unmasked by any kind of sheltering parapet. Suffering and death in every form, from wounds, from the cruel heat, from hard toil and watching, from over-crowding, from scanty or unwholesome food, from lack of every bodily comfort, from keen continuous stress of mind, left daily more and more visible marks on that poor flock of sheep huddled together in vain hope of shelter from the greed of those ruthless wolves.*

A few days after the siege began, the last regular ration of meat was served out to the fighting men. Thenceforth their chief food was dál (a kind of pea) and chapáthis, save when a stray horse or bullock came within reach of the men on night-duty. Erelong most of the native servants had stolen away from the doomed intrenchments. By the third day the great water-jars in the barracks were all empty, and everyone had to help himself after nightfall from a well that lay exposed to the enemy's fire. For about two hours of the night, while the besiegers rested to bathe, to eat their dinners and enjoy their smoke, a crowd of eager visitants met round the well with buckets, pitchers, anything fit to hold water for the next day's needs. Of strong drinks, however, such as beer and rum, there remained to the last a fair supply, in spite of the bursting of several hogsheads by the enemy's round-shot.

As the besiegers grew bolder and more numerous, the trials of the besieged grew harder. The round-shot crashed more and more ruinously through the barrack walls, while from behind every nearer lurking-place parties of Sepoys kept up a galling musket-fire on all who showed themselves within range. Erelong not one of our few gunners remained unhurt, and the volunteers who replaced them fell fast also. A well-aimed fire of shells from the enemy's mortars soon caused the striking of the tents wherein some officers with their families had hitherto found a shelter more private than the crowded barracks. On the 13th of June a yet more fatal bolt fired the tile-covered thatch of the hospital barrack, where all the sick and wounded lay under the same roof with the families of the English soldiers. In a moment the fresh breeze had fanned up so fierce a blaze that it became a question only of saving lives. With some ado the women and children were got away; but so strongly did the besiegers muster in the church and the empty bungalows nearest the intrenchments, that few of the fighting-men could be spared to look after the sick and wounded, forty of whom were burned to ashes before help could

* Trotter; Mowbray-Thompson.

come. But the cowards who swarmed outside in overwhelming strength still shrank from meeting at close quarters a desperate foe. Some four thousand armed Sepoys fell back before the well-aimed fire of a few gunners and the manifest resolve of three hundred Britons to sell their lives as dearly as they could.

With the blazing hospital and its doomed inmates, nearly the whole stock of medicines for the garrison was destroyed. From that time the deaths in the one crowded barrack, already riddled through and through with round shot and strewn with bits of burst shells, grew more frequent, the sufferings of the sick, wounded, and infirm more heartrending. Nothing indeed but the fierce excitement of daily renewed battles and the hope of speedy deliverance could have enabled even the strongest to live through all the hardships of that dreadful siege. There was no time for loving offices to the dead, whose bodies, hastily laid out in the verandahs, awaited the coming of the nightly fatigue party told off for burying them in a well outside the intrenchment. At almost any hour in the twenty-four a shot would come tearing through the brickbuilt walls, or a shell ray out destruction over some new place. After the 13th there was little rest for the luckless garrison; and day by day fresh efforts to storm their weak defences were baffled only by their unceasing watchfulness, their steadfast daring, and the skilful coolness of their few remaining gunners.*

If cool courage, stubborn energy, and resourceful skill could have saved the Cawnpore garrison, their salvation would have been assured. Among many brave and able comrades there was none so worthy as Captain Moore, of the 32nd Foot, to take up that leading part which poor Sir H. Wheeler, through stress of age and sickness, could no longer fill. With his arm in a sling from a wound received early in the siege, Moore went to and fro among his fellows, counselling, cheering, at need rebuking them; full of resources for every strait, quick to guard against each new danger, always first to show himself wherever the fire seemed hottest or the work before him most hazardous. Twice with the help of some twenty followers did he manage by a well-timed sally to spike the guns which the Nána's men had brought to bear upon his perilous post in a half-finished barrack outside the intrenchment. More than once did his little band of picked marksmen drive hundreds of Sepoys back with heavy slaughter at the cost of only a few wounds for themselves. Not a bullet from

* Trotter; Mowbray-Thompson.

their rifles ever missed its mark, nor did Ashe's gunners fail to crown the enemy's discomfiture with murderous salutes of grape and canister.

One of these repulses happened on the 21st of June, the day chosen by the enemy for one last overwhelming rush upon their obstinate prey. Thousands of regulars and ragamuffins set forth that morning in several bodies, resolved to annihilate the Farangi once for all. From every side they swarmed on. Some kept rolling before them large bales of cotton, from behind which they delivered at short intervals a galling musketry-fire. Others thronged into the furthermost of the unfinished barracks where only Mowbray-Thompson and his little band stood between them and the south-eastern face of the intrenchment. From the north-east a third body kept up a cruel hail of bullets, which Captain Kempland's small party spent an hour and a half in one long unflagging effort to subdue. When the bales were about a hundred and fifty yards from the breastwork, a great rush of shouting rebels from the churchyard made many a brave man set his teeth together, as resolved at any rate to die hard. But the Nána's hour of triumph was not yet. Every bullet from the breastwork and from the outpost in the unfinished barrack carried death or havoc into the yelling crowd. Its actual leader, the subadar-major of the 1st Sepoy Infantry, was among the first to fall. Cowed by his fate and swept down in scores by the unerring file-fire, the rest were finally scattered by a few rounds of canister from our guns. Nowhere did the rebel dead lie so thick as in front of the post which Moore had entrusted to Mowbray-Thompson and his little band. Moore himself on that eventful day was everywhere. So utter was the rout that the enemy begged for leave to bury their dead.*

In that day's death-grapple, as indeed on many a former day, instances of heroic daring must have been common enough. The native pride and courage of their race, the silent teachings of their religion, the strength imparted by hope or despair, by mutual trust, or the mere sense of duty to their country, all conspired to raise the bulk of Wheeler's garrison above the level of average Englishi manhood. In these weeks of intense suffering the heroes of either sex were numerous, the cowardly and the selfish remarkably few. From the simple tales of two or three survivors it is easy to guess how many a deed of high courage, of heroic endurance, must remain untold. Of one of those survivors another has

* Mowbray-Thompson; Trotter; Kaye.

recorded a feat of special hardihood done on this particular day. It was noon: an ammunition waggon blown up by a chance shot threatened to involve some others near it in a common destruction. A sharp fire from the Sepoy batteries boomed death to all who approached the burning waggon. At any moment a fresh explosion might take place. Of the gunners hardly one remained unhurt, and the rest of the fighting-men lay tired out with that morning's struggle. In this strait, young Delafosse of the 53rd Sepoys, threw himself under the blazing woodwork, pulling it as far as he might to pieces, and scattering earth over the flames. By this means and a few bucketfuls of water which two soldiers kept handing to him, he succeeded in preventing another and yet worse explosion without harm to himself or his brave helpmates.*

For yet three more days the iron hail kept beating down upon the wasted garrison. By that time the riddled, ruinous barracks threatened to topple over with the first shower of rain, already due. The broad verandahs had all been knocked to pieces. In search of shelter from the enemy's fire, not a few had lately buried themselves under the lines of parapet, in holes roofed over with boxes and other furniture. Most of the guns were utterly disabled. Half rations of uncooked grain had become the regular fare of all but the few who could still afford to pay extravagantly for the luxury of an ill-cooked meal. At night, the women had to take their turns in keeping watch with the men, under a fire of shot and shell which marred the slumbers of the weariest. There were no medicines for the sick and wounded, no comforts left for helpless age, none for the children still living in that earthly hell, none for the mothers, who, in that dreadful season, gave birth to babes marked out for an early and painful death. Day by day the hope of deliverance grew fainter, although some of the more sanguine still clung to the chance of impossible succour from Lucknow. A few who stole away from the intrenchment only went the sooner to their doom. But for their wives, sisters, and little ones, the men might long since have cut their way through all the Nána's rabble to Allahábád. Even now, the fear of what might befall their tender charges, in the event of their own defeat, alone withheld them from sallying forth by night in one last furious effort to seize the enemy's guns.

At length, on the 24th of June, there set forth from the intrenchment a Mr. Shepherd of the commissariat, who, disguised as a native cook, was to make his way into the city and bribe

* M.-Thompson; Trotter.

some of the leading men into helping the garrison out of their evil plight. Falling by the way into hostile hands, his story misdoubted, but his English origin never once unmasked, the baffled emissary remained a prisoner among the rebels to the day when Havelock reached Cawnpore. Meanwhile, the Nána himself had made a show of treating with the bold Farangis, whose desperate defence aroused the wonder—if it could not soften the hearts—of their ruthless foes. On the very day of Shepherd's departure, a Christian woman, who had fallen into the Nána's hands, brought Sir Hugh Wheeler a formal overture from the rebel chief. To all who were "in no way connected with the acts of Lord Dalhousie" the Nána offered a safe passage to Allahábád in return for the surrender of all their arms and of the public treasure in the intrenched lines.

After a meeting on the 25th between Moore and the Nána's infamous agent, Azimulla Khán, who swore by all that was holy to furnish the garrison with boats and food for the voyage, the surviving English, many of them with sore misgivings, agreed to accept the terms proffered by one of whose villany they had yet to realize the full measure. The next day was spent in preparing for their departure, in yielding up the Government treasure, in procuring some poor comforts for the sick and wounded, in examining the boats designed for their reception. On the morning of the 27th, a sad train of about 450 persons on foot, on elephants, in carts and doolies, left the scene of their long suffering, the last resting-place of half their former numbers, to embark on board some twenty vessels, not one of which was fated to reach its promised goal.*

Our hapless countrymen little knew that the tiger with whom they had just been parleying was fresh from tasting Farangi blood. On the 4th of June a hundred and thirty of our people had taken to their boats in flight from the mutinous Sepoys quartered at Fathigarh. For some days all went well, until the fugitives approached what seemed to them the safer neighbourhood of Cawnpore. Unhappily, the Nána got news of their coming. A body of his soldiers stopped the boats, took out all their occupants, and by his order put every soul to death.

Unwecting of these and other tragedies enacted by the Nána's orders, the remnant of the Cawnpore garrison were escorted down to the river by a large number of armed Sepoys. The sick, the wounded, the dying, were lifted into their places. Some of the

* Kaye; Trotter; Thompson; Official Papers.

leading boats were already in mid-stream, and the rest were being shoved off from the muddy banks, when of a sudden three guns fired from the Nána's camp heralded a burst of treachery as coldly cruel as even Eastern cunning could have devised. In a moment a shattering musket-fire opened volley after volley on the nearer boats. The native boatmen scrambled on shore; the thatched coverings of several boats were soon ablaze, and most of their occupants were shot or drowned in wild efforts to escape death by burning. Turn where the victims would, there seemed no outlet from that horrible snare: from the water, from either shore, death glowered on all that doomed party. A few of the boats were steered across the river; but the mutineers from Azimgarh, going up through Oudh, were in time to play the part of Charybdis to the raging Scylla of Cawnpore. Erelong most of the vessels had fallen into the murderers' hands; the men still alive in them were slain forthwith; but the women and children were carried off to the Nána's camp, where, shut up in one small building, with scant attendance and sorry food, they had to endure a few weeks longer the pain of sharp wounds, the weight of sickness and heart-maddening sorrows, and the shame of insulting speeches from the tools of the Nána's cruelty, if not his lust.

One boat, however, bore its burden, increased by stray fugitives from other boats, many miles away from the scene of carnage. Worried as they went by frequent showers of bullets from both banks, more than a hundred people, most of whom were sick or wounded and all half-starved, still held their way down the river without much hindrance, until on the morning of the 29th their boat stuck fast upon a sandbank not far from Fathipur. After vain efforts to push her off, under a galling fire from the shore, fourteen men, including the brave young Delafosse and Mowbray-Thompson, jumped into the water and hurled themselves on their pursuers with the fury of despair. Returning to the river-side from their successful onset, they found the boat gone and a fresh swarm of ruffians barring their way. With a well-delivered volley and another desperate rush, thirteen of their number got alive into a small Hindu temple beside the river. Foiled in their attacks on this poor stronghold, the hunters proceeded to smoke out their prey. After one more despairing sally for life or death, seven of the thirteen gained the water. Two of these were presently shot, and a third let himself float too near the bank and certain death. Swimming, floating, and diving by turns for several miles under a frequent fire, the surviving four, Lieutenants

Mowbray-Thompson and Delafosse, Gunner Sullivan, and Priv[illegible] Murphy found timely help, rest, and deliverance from further danger at the hands of a friendly Rajah on the Oudh shore. Under his safe keeping they dwelt in peace until the sound of Havelock's advance enabled them once more to grasp the hands of their admiring countrymen; to tell and to learn all that was yet knowable touching the dark tragedy in which they had borne so memorable a part.*

These four naked, starved, wounded, fainting swimmers, whom the Rajah's men had to help on shore, were soon to become the sole survivors of the 450 who had left the intrenchment on the 27th of June. For the boat they had last seen upon the sand-bank was also doomed to fall into the foeman's hands. A sudden freshet floated it off its shallow bed; but the stream was to prove more merciful than the Nána's men. Erelong, the weary fugitives saw their ark surrounded by fresh bands of ruffians, its prow pointed up stream, and themselves caught fast beyond redemption in the toils of their deadliest foe. On reaching Cawnpore, the fourth day after their fateful start, the men of the party, including poor old Wheeler, who lay already wounded to the death, were taken out of the boat and shot down in the Nána's presence, after brief time given for a parting prayer. One brave lady perished with her husband, round whom she had firmly locked her arms in one last embrace. The rest of the women and children, reserved for yet further suffering, were carried off to a bungalow near the Assembly-Room, whither had just been transferred the prisoners taken on the 27th of June.†

To this band of lorn wretches another batch of women and children, with a few men, was added about the 12th of July. These were the remnant of a larger party, that left Fathigarh—the military and civil station for the town of Farokhabad—on the 4th of the same month. Half mutinous in the beginning, but seemingly penitent by the middle of June, the 10th Sepoys refused on the 15th to fraternize with the 41st, then marching towards Delhi with hands fresh from the slaughters of Sitápur. Three days later, on finding the mutineers already come across the Ganges, a final change for the worse came over the spirit of Colonel Smith's Sepoys. After helping themselves to the treasure which the 41st had looked to share with them, they attacked the faithful few among their own number; and then the two regiments, together with a host of the Farokhabad Nawáb's followers, turned

* M.-Thompson; Trotter; Kaye. † Trotter; Kaye.

their arms against the intrenched post in the Agency compound, where a hundred and ten persons, including forty-three able-bodied men, hoped with the means at their command to ride out the impending storm.

From the 27th of June, the first day of hard fighting, down to the 4th of July, General Goldie's garrison made good their defence; high functionaries, civil and military, working like common soldiers at their seven guns; while everyone who could handle a musket or stand sentry bore his part in the fight against overwhelming numbers, a short supply of cartridges, and the defects of a barely tenable post. Worn out at last with toil and watching, several of the fighting men dead or disabled, one mine already sprung, and another almost ready to be sprung beneath them, the besieged saw no hope of safety except in flight. Of the three boats in which they started down the river one had soon to be abandoned as unmanageable, and another grounded near Singhirámpur. A few of its occupants swam to the leading boat, or found their way into friendly hands on shore; but the rest were shot or drowned in vain efforts to elude their pursuers. The people in the one remaining boat dropped down safely as far as Bithúr; but being enticed on land by treacherous natives, they were seized and carried off to Cawnpore. There this party of forty-seven, including about a dozen men, shared the captivity of those already pining in the bungalow which, a few days later, was to become the shambles of two hundred English souls.*

Meanwhile Havelock's column was struggling manfully towards the same spot. Nine hundred men from the 64th, 78th, and 84th Foot, a battery of Royal Artillery—the first employed in India—and a hundred and fifty of Brasyer's Sikhs, with twenty volunteer horse and thirty of Palliser's Irregulars, made up the little force which Havelock on the 7th of July led out of Allahábád in support of Renaud's advance on Fathipur. For some days past this bold officer had been clearing the way for Havelock with an energy to which scores of bodies dangling from the trees and many a village reduced to ashes bore terrible witness. On the 10th, as he lay at Kágan, twenty-four miles from Fathipur, Renaud learned that a strong force of rebels, sent down by the butcher of Bithúr, was advancing thither with twelve guns to sweep the Farangis away before it. A message from Renaud soon brought Havelock's column to his side. A forced march under a cruel sun placed the two columns about four miles from Fathipur, where Havelock

* Trotter.

halted his tired soldiers on the 12th. But the rest he hoped to give them was soon cut short. A reconnaissance made by Colonel Tytler disclosed the enemy, about three thousand five hundred strong, advancing to the attack. Havelock at once took up the challenge. Throwing his infantry into line of quarter-distance columns, covered by skirmishers armed with the new Enfield rifle, and posting his eight guns in the centre, he marched his troops over fields by that time covered with water towards the line of villages, hillocks and mango-groves which commanded the approach to Fathipur. His small force of cavalry moved on either flank under the chief command of Captain Beatson, who like Neill had served with the Turkish Contingent during the Crimean war.

In ten minutes the hardest of the fighting was over. Broken by the fire from the far-reaching Enfields, the enemy were soon fleeing in amazed disorder from the rush of grape and shrapnel with which Maude's gunners swept them down at point-blank range. Gun after gun fell into our hands, Renaud's soldiers won a hillock on the right in dashing style; and the rest of our wearied infantry helped to push the rebels steadily back to their last standing-place, a mile beyond the town. Then for a moment the tide of victory seemed to flag; the brave British infantry had nearly worn themselves out. A sudden charge of rebel horse was met by the most of Palliser's troopers with a rapid movement to the rear. But the Fusiliers and Highlanders on the right soon forced the assailants backwards; and under a shattering fire from their own well-kept line, once more the guns toiled up to the front; the riflemen also pouring in their deadly hail, until, after four hours' fighting, the day was won. Strange to say, not an English soldier had been hurt by the enemy, and only one Sikh, besides a few of Palliser's Horse. But "twelve British soldiers," wrote Havelock, "were struck down by the sun and never rose again."

The whole of the enemy's guns and much other prize fell into the victors' hands. Had Havelock's cavalry been stronger or more trustworthy, his victory would have been yet more decisive, and his further progress far less delayed. Barrow and his twenty volunteers could do but little towards destroying hundreds of flying Pandies,* and the small body of Irregulars to their cool cowardice on the 12th were two days after to add as cool an attempt at plundering the baggage of their own force. This want

* Pándi was a common family name among the Sepoys. Hence it came to be applied to the Sepoys in general.

of cavalry had been foreseen, both by Beatson, who in the middle of June had exhorted the Government to raise a regiment of Eurasian horse in Bengal, and afterwards by Havelock, who had counselled the sending up of all unemployed officers to serve as troopers in the field. But no heed was given at the right moment to advice so easy to follow, and Havelock was doomed to see the fruits of victory after victory snatched from his grasp, and to waste his men in a series of exhausting struggles against weather and human odds, for lack of a few hundred stout troopers able to follow up, to scatter, perhaps to annihilate the beaten foe.*

The day's rest at Fathipur was employed among other things in hanging the native magistrate who, a few weeks before, had decreed the murder, after a mock trial, of the brave old fanatic Robert Tucker, Judge of Fathipur, victim to his own noble rashness in staying at his post after all his companions had fled from before the violence of a bloodthirsty mob and the approach of mutineers from Allahábád.† The town itself was given up to plunder in return for the havoc of the past month.

With nine of the captured guns and two of his own six-pounders Havelock on the 14th resumed his march. Two sharp engagements on the following day brought him across the Pándu stream by a bridge which the rebels with two heavy guns had vainly defended against Maude's artillery-fire and the resistless onset of Renaud's Fusiliers. In these two fights, of which the first by the village of Aung was the most stubbornly maintained, the British took four guns and lost twenty-five by death or wounds. Heaviest of all was the loss of Major Renaud, who fell at Aung mortally wounded at the head of his daring "Lambs." A cry of sorrow rose from every station in India at the news of his untimely death.‡

Happily many heroes were still left in that daily lessening band, which had yet harder work to accomplish on the morrow. From Cawnpore, still twenty miles off, the Nána himself was advancing with fresh troops to crush, if possible, his daring foe. Their spirits cheered by this news, and by the hope of yet saving their captive countrymen, Havelock's soldiers tramped on through the night of the 15th and far into the next morning before any signs of a nearing enemy became visible. At length, after the needful mid-day halt, they marched about two miles further to find five thousand of the enemy, with eight heavy guns, strongly posted among villages and mango-groves, with their left resting nearly on

* Trotter; Official Papers. † Sherer's Narrative. ‡ Trotter; Kaye.

the Ganges. Their centre, thrown somewhat backward, commanded the two roads leading into Cawnpore. To attack them in front with only a thousand British and three hundred Sikhs would have involved a perilous waste of precious lives. Screened by clumps of trees and the forward movements of his few cavalry, Havelock edged off obliquely to his own right with the view of turning the enemy's left. For a while their shot fell harmless among Barrow's horse in front; but the feint being at last discovered, some of their guns were wheeled towards the side where our troops were plodding forward through the wet and broken ground. Not a shot was fired in answer, until at the right moment our brave infantry, covered by their guns and skirmishers, marched down in echeloned line upon the enemy's left. While the battle of the guns still raged, before the rebels had time to bring their right forward, the British foot were hurled upon the masses in their front. Village after village was carried at the bayonet's point, and half the enemy's line was routed before any help could come from their right wing. Nothing could withstand the conquering rush of the Highlanders on one intrenched village guarded by three heavy guns. Not less admirable was the crowning stroke by which the 64th Foot, sweeping forward under showers of grape, succeeded in silencing the last gun that still barred the way into the cantonments of Cawnpore. Well, too, might Havelock join his infantry in cheering Captain Barrow and his score of "Gentlemen Volunteers," as they rode back with sabres red and blunted from their fearfully daring onslaught into a mass of yet unbroken troops.*

After a struggle which lasted nearly three hours, the enemy fled in the growing darkness, and the road to Cawnpore lay wide open to our tired soldiers, whose losses in the unequal fight amounted only to eight slain and eighty-eight disabled. The Peshwa of a fortnight—for as such the Nána had proclaimed himself on the 1st of July—had learned already that Wheeler's countrymen could wreak stern vengeance for the butcheries they might not forestall. Of those who were struck down that day by wounds or sickness none was so widely mourned as Havelock's Adjutant-General, Captain Beatson, whose talents, energy, and popular manners had impressed themselves upon the whole camp. A sunstroke, followed by an attack of cholera, carried him off the second day after the fight.

Utterly exhausted with that long day's work, the victors passed the night of the 16th without food or cover on the damp parade-

* Trotter; Kaye; Marshman.

ground of Cawnpore. Three heavy and four light guns were in park. The self-styled Peshwa with the wrecks of his beaten army fell back upon his own domain of Bithúr, after blowing up the Cawnpore magazine. He had already sacrificed the last of his helpless captives to the demon of his balked revenge. On the 15th of July, the day of his defeat at the Pandu Nadi, the few men among the captives were brought forth and slain before the Nána's own eyes. Then through the doors and windows of their close prison shot after shot was fired by a party of Sepoys into the crowd of women and children, who lay or stood huddled together, scared, hopeless, tired of living: some half dead already with grief or pain, nearly all content to die there and then rather than go forth to meet perhaps a yet more awful doom. The butchery thus begun from outside was afterwards finished by other hands with swords, bayonets, long knives, with any weapons that might serve the need of ruffians whose lust for blood was doubtless whetted by the joy of such a triumph over the proud countrymen of their late masters. Next morning the mangled bodies, some still, it is said, alive, were stripped, hacked afresh, and tumbled into the nearest well. Such appears to be the short, but sufficiently horrible, truth about a massacre yet more wantonly fiendish than that which Naiwáb Kásim wrought at Patna in 1763, by the hands of that Walter Reinhardt who lives in history under the name of Sumru.*

On the morning of the 17th of July Havelock's little army marched further into the Cawnpore cantonments, past the riddled and battered walls which men could hardly believe that any mortal garrison had contrived to defend for three long weeks; on through the silent, half-ruined city, where, amidst many traces of blood and pillage, one swarthy prisoner, the clerk who had left the intrenchment on the 24th of June, was discovered and set free. His tale of horror was presently confirmed by the sight of the memorable slaughterhouse and its adjacent well. From the latter, choked with its two hundred dead, gleamed out a ghastly bundle of legs and arms. Inside the Bibi-Garh or Women's House, as it was called, men gazed with burning eyes and compressed lips on deep broad pools of blood, on stray pieces of clothing and feminine ornament, on many a sad token of human suffering, faith and love. Locks of hair, leaves of Bibles and other holy books, combs, shoes, children's frocks, bonnets, workboxes, daguerreotypes, attested the kind of life so foully done away by the swords and

* Trotter; Kaye; Sherer.

bullets which had left their marks in plenty upon the blood-smeared walls and pillars. What wonder if they who saw these things, the blood of English women and children still fresh, their mangled bodies hardly yet stiff, came away with a lock of hair or a bit of dress in their hands; as witness of the vow they had taken to spare no living soul among the rebels, until full vengeance had been reaped for all that innocent blood!

Havelock's own desire had now been gratified. He had "lived to command in a successful action;" and the Battle of Cawnpore, the fourth of his winning, was a victory due not less to his own strategy than to the splendid courage and endurance of his men. In the general order issued to his troops their grateful leader avowed himself "satisfied, and more than satisfied," with them. He had "never seen steadier or more devoted troops." Between the 7th and the 16th of July they had marched 126 miles under an Indian sun and fought four actions. But their labours, he warned them, were only beginning. "Your comrades at Lucknow are in peril; Agra is besieged; Delhi is still the focus of mutiny and rebellion. You must make great sacrifices if you would obtain great results. Three cities have to be saved; two strong places to be deblockaded. Your General is confident that he can effect all these things, and restore this part of India to tranquillity, if you will only second him with your efforts, and if your discipline is equal to your valour." The warning was indeed well-timed in view of the strong temptations to revenge, plunder, and hard drinking which assailed his victorious troops. In a few days Havelock had to order his provost-marshal to "hang up in their uniform all British soldiers that plunder;" and commanding officers were distinctly warned that this should not be an idle threat.*

* Marshman.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST RELIEF OF LUCKNOW.

After two days spent in resting his wearied troops, in taking measures to restrain their appetite for strong drink, and in mounting fifty of his foot-soldiers on horses, taken from the disarmed Irregulars, Havelock on the 19th of July sent Major Stephenson with the Fusiliers and Sikhs of Renaud's little force and the newly-raised troop of cavalry to take possession of Bithúr. Stephenson's errand was soon discharged, for the ruffian Nána had already crossed the Ganges with the remnant of his followers, after slaying the last of his English captives, Mrs. Carter, and burying the bulk of his treasure in wells. Marching into his abandoned stronghold, his pursuers took quiet possession of twenty guns and a great many head of cattle. After blowing up the magazine and burning the palace to the ground, Stephenson's troops returned with their booty to Cawnpore. By this time Havelock had received from Delhi and Agra letters that told him how slowly the siege of the former city was advancing, and how Polwhele's soldiers had been followed up to the walls of Agra Fort by the very foe they had hoped to drive before them. From Lucknow also had come the news of a whole province up in revolt, of a British garrison already besieged, and of its noble leader, Havelock's old friend and comrade, dead.

On the 20th Neill himself reached Cawnpore, closely followed by 227 men of the 84th Foot, the only succours that he could bring up from Allahábád. No time was lost in preparing for Havelock's onward march to Lucknow, which he still hoped to reach a few days after he had carried his troops across the Ganges. With immense exertion twenty boats were collected for the passage of a river running swift and broad over its rain-filled bed. Five days were spent in ferrying over twelve hundred British, three hundred Sikhs, and ten poorly equipped guns.

Meanwhile thousands of workmen were busily employed in making a strong intrenchment for the troops destined to remain behind. By the 25th of July Havelock himself had passed over into Oudh, leaving Neill with barely three hundred men to look after his sick and wounded, and to keep guard over the town and neighbourhood of Cawnpore.*

At Cawnpore, as at Allahábád, Neill's shrewd, vigorous nature soon stamped itself on all he did. Erelong, with good help from Mr. John Sherer, the new magistrate, order was restored throughout the city and the surrounding district. All plunderers were promptly punished, heaps of plundered property brought into camp, numbers of rebels seized and given over to their just deserts. Under his orders Captain Bruce soon got together a good body of native police and spies; every serviceable horse was seized or bought up for the use of our batteries and mounted volunteers; every man who seemed at all trustworthy was enlisted into the public service. Neill earnestly besought the Government to send him more skilled doctors. The civil authorities were strongly urged to resume their posts in the country between Cawnpore and Allahábád. His own post he fixed in the intrenched camp, which overlooked and commanded every approach to the adjacent river. The well where lay the bodies of so many slaughtered women and children was, by his order, "filled up, and neatly and decently covered over to form their grave." The slaughter-house itself, where the blood of the Nána's victims still lay in pools an inch or two deep, was reserved for cleansing by prisoners condemned to death for taking an active part in the mutiny. Each of the leading "miscreants," by way of prelude to his own hanging, was taken down to the Bibi-Garh and forced, under threat of a sound flogging, to clean up so many inches of the blood-reeking floor. If any high-caste ruffian demurred to this mode of expiating his misdeeds, his scruples were soon relieved by a stroke or two of the lash. One man, a Mohammadan officer of a civil court, was even forced to lick up some of the blood. All this, said Neill, might be "strange law," displeasing to "some of our Brahmanised elderly gentlemen," but in his opinion it suited the occasion well, as "a fearful punishment for a revolting, cowardly, barbarous deed."†

Whatever the candid moralist may have to urge against so un-Christian a mode of rendering evil for evil, it is only fair to make large allowance for the dreadful provocations which drove some of

* Marshman; Kaye; Trotter. † Kaye; Trotter.

the bravest and least cruel of their race into courses unworthy of their better selves. "Who could be merciful?" Neill indignantly asked, to any of the "fiends" concerned in the butcheries on the scene of which he had just been gazing with horror-stricken eyes. The very atmosphere of the place and time fostered a blind fury of revenge and hate in hearts of the manliest texture. There was hardly an Englishman in that part of India who, in the same position, might not have acted in much the same way; and there were many indeed who would have gone, and did go, much further than Neill himself on the path which he honestly held it his duty to follow. It was a time when the tenderest hearts grew hard, and the noblest natures were tempted to sin most grievously against the light within them. At such a moment even the heroic John Nicholson stooped, in all seriousness, to propose—in a letter to his friend Edwardes—"a Bill for the flaying alive, impalement, or burning of the murderers of the women and children at Delhi."* The idea of letting such fiends off with simple hanging was to his mind altogether "maddening," and, like Cromwell after Drogheda, he quoted Scripture in justification of his savage desires. The old saying, "Corruptio optimi pessima," was not seldom verified in this dark year.

On the 28th of July, Havelock's little army lay at Mangalwár, about six miles from the Ganges. By that time he had received from the beleaguered garrison at Lucknow letters which must have convinced him that his hopes of reaching that place in five or six days were rather too hastily formed. In a letter to Sir P. Grant, who had warned him of the risks he ran, he had just acknowledged "the extreme delicacy and difficulty of any operation to relieve Colonel Inglis," who then commanded the Lucknow garrison. But his troops, proud of their past achievements and still maddened by memories of Cawnpore, were eager for a fresh advance; his own zeal, inflamed by a secret craving for the world's applause, made light of the difficulties in his path; and he still reckoned on the early approach of his promised succours from below. Neill, if any man, could be safely trusted to hold Cawnpore against any odds, while his own advance into Oudh might help Inglis, by drawing large numbers of the enemy away from the immediate neighbourhood of Lucknow.†

Let us turn meanwhile from Mangalwár to the capital of Oudh. Down to the end of June Sir Henry Lawrence still held command of Lucknow and its neighbourhood. In that one oasis amidst a

* Kaye. † Marshman; Malleson.

broad waste of rebellion he had laid up stores of food and defensive appliances enough for a siege of several months. Sickness was abating; the garrison were in good heart. Nearly eight hundred faithful Sepoys, Sikhs, and pensioners, raised their fighting strength to sixteen hundred. In spite of a wasting illness, Sir Henry never lost his head nor slackened his exertions for the public good. The defences of the Residency were made as strong as time and circumstances would allow. He went about with a cheerful countenance, while his heart was racked with anxiety for the fate of those entrusted to his charge. In reply to Wheeler's piteous messages for help, he could only warn him against treating with the false-hearted Nána of Bithúr. Looking to the state of the country, the utter lack of means for crossing the Ganges, and the weakness of his own garrison, he refused, with many a pang, to send out any of his English troops on an enterprise which no one save the bold but rash-headed Martin Gubbins deemed at all feasible. Amidst many conflicting counsels he always held his own way, with a firmness shaken neither by the fears of the more desponding, nor by the rash impatience of men like Gubbins, who were always urging him to some decisive movement fraught with far more of danger than of seeming good.*

On the 28th of June Sir Henry learned the news of Wheeler's surrender and the Nána's savage treachery. By that time a large force of rebels was massed at Nawábganj, twenty miles from Lucknow, on the Faizabad Road. Next day their advance guard had reached Chinhat, eight miles only from the Residency. The crisis which Sir Henry had long expected was now at hand, unless by some forward movement he could succeed in deferring it a little longer. On the morning of the 30th he led out his little brigade of horse and foot, six hundred and seventy strong, of whom half were English, with eleven guns, six manned by natives, to feel the strength, if possible to check the progress, of several thousand Sepoy mutineers. Lured on by the reports of wayfarers, and the seeming absence of any foe, our troops were not far from Chinhat when they descried the enemy drawn up in their front behind long rows of trees. For some time the batteries on both sides exchanged a heavy fire. At last the infantry were ordered to seize two villages that fronted either flank. The village on the right was soon held by our Sepoys, but that on the left swarmed with rebels before the men of the 32nd, spent with fatigue, long fasting, and the want of their morning dram, were halfway across

* Merivale; Malleson; Kaye.

the intervening ground. Swept down by the fire from the village, and outflanked by a steadily advancing foe, the British infantry turned their faces from a battle already lost. Two hundred and twenty faithful Sepoys and thirty-six mounted volunteers covered the retreat.

By this time three guns of the Oudh battery had been upset or abandoned by the native drivers, who rode off to join the enemy. The hundred and twenty native troopers were galloping back to Lucknow. In spite of Bonham's heroic efforts, our heavy howitzer fell into the enemy's hands. Our own gunners did their duty manfully, but in vain, against overwhelming odds. Fighting and fleeing by turns under a fierce sun and a scathing fire from guns which our own were presently unable for want of ammunition to answer, their shattered ranks growing ever thinner and less orderly, our troops struggled back into Lucknow a mere mob, leaving behind them four guns and a sixth of their number dead. Of the 32nd Foot alone, which had sent three hundred bayonets into the field, a hundred and fifteen were slain, including their brave leader, Colonel Case, and thirty-nine wounded. But for a desperate charge of Radcliffe's gentlemen volunteers, for the devoted bearing of our faithful Sepoys, and the stand which Sir Henry made at the Kukrail Bridge, with lighted portfires beside his unloaded guns, very few of that routed force would have reached the Residency alive. "My God! and I brought them to this!" exclaimed their noble leader, wringing his hands over the utter blasting of his morning hopes. By noon of that same day, as the last of the wounded and stragglers entered their lines, the first of the enemy's roundshot came crashing into the Residency from across the iron bridge.*

Owing to this great disaster, for which Sir Henry himself was not all—if at all—to blame,—it was hardly his fault, for instance, that his English infantry missed their appointed rations of coffee, biscuit, and rum—the Chief Commissioner had now to do in haste what he had always resolved, if need were, to do more leisurely. He must forthwith contract his lines within the bounds of the Residency defences, at whatever sacrifice of the supplies and powder stored up elsewhere. At midnight of the 1st of July the Machhi-Bhâwan was blown up with all its contents, after every man and gun had been quietly and skilfully brought away. Within one entrenched and roughly fortified post were now

* Merivale; Kaye; Malleson; Trotter; "The Defence of Lucknow," by a Staff Officer.

assembled about nine hundred and twenty white men, and seven hundred and sixty natives, fit to bear arms. Sixty-eight women and sixty-six children shared the fortunes of the besieged, fortunes which just then looked so gloomy that Lawrence, writing to Havelock, feared himself unable to hold out longer than fifteen or twenty days. The odds against him were alarming enough, but his dauntless spirit rose to meet the new danger, and his masterful energy lent new vigour to the preparations for an obstinate defence. The gloom which for a moment overhung the garrison speedily passed away. With much more of hope than fear, the besieged saw their assailants closing round their weakly-guarded lines. Each man knew how much depended on his own watchfulness, courage, and endurance. "No surrender" was Sir Henry's watchword, and all alike were prepared to die fighting rather than yield.

But the leader in whom all men trusted—save, perhaps, the self-willed Gubbins—was too soon to be taken from them. On the morning of the 2nd of July a shell burst in Sir Henry's room, not so harmlessly as that which burst there the day before. For two days he lingered with a dreadful wound below the hip, still able at times to issue a few last directions, messages, and commands, worthy alike of a thorough soldier and a guileless Christian. To Major Banks, who was to succeed him as Chief Commissioner, and to Colonel Inglis, who now took command of the garrison, his dying injunction was "Never give in." On the 4th of July his great soul fled, the soul of one who, in the words he himself had once suggested for his own epitaph, had always "tried to do his duty." The hearts of the garrison sank within them under the sense of their heavy loss. The very soldiers who were about to bear his body to the grave stooped down one after another to kiss his cold forehead, so deep was the universal sorrow for the death of "a public benefactor and a warm personal friend." Such were the words in which Colonel Inglis lived to show forth the common love and admiration for "the great and good man" to whose untiring foresight the final deliverance of his countrymen at Lucknow was mainly owing. To his country, his friends, to all who received his orders, his advice, his help by word or deed, the loss of such a man at such a moment might well seem beyond repair.* On the 22nd of July, before the news of his death could reach England, the Court of Directors appointed him provisional successor to Lord Canning in the event of that noble-

* Merivale; Trotter; Kaye; Colonel Inglis's Lucknow Despatch; "Life of Sir H. Edwardes."

man's death, resignation, or return home. When the sad news did reach England, it seemed almost as if the knell of our Indian Empire had been rung.

But the spirit of Henry Lawrence still dwelt and wrought amidst that lonely garrison. Leaders like Inglis, Banks, Gubbins, Anderson, Fulton, Bonham, Aitken, found no dearth of high courage among the fighting-men, civilians, women of all classes, who had to play their several parts in that long struggle against fearful odds. Under every drawback of scant numbers, of sickness aggravated by heat and foul air, by improper or deficient food, by overwork and long stress of mind; in spite of hopes continually cheated, of a position weakened from the first by Sir Henry's tenderness for holy places and private houses lying too near his own outworks, the mixed garrison of Englishmen, Sikhs, and faithful Sepoys upheld for three months the honour of their flag and the safety of their women against many thousands of well-armed and disciplined Pandies, aided by the forces of insurgent Tálukdárs and the fighting-men of a large and populous city.

Through all that time every man's services were in daily, almost hourly request. Each had to take his turn in handling pick and spade, in moving guns, ammunition, commissariat stores, in burying a comrade or a putrid horse or bullock, in standing sentry, in loading or firing rifles, in doing scavenger's work, in discharging all kinds of duties, however hard, dangerous, or unwonted. Each fought, toiled, watched, as fully aware how much of the common safety was staked upon his own particular efforts. Nor were the women backward in proving themselves fit helpmates for the men. As household drudges or as hospital nurses, they never flinched from any hardship or hazard that crossed the path of their duty. In the midst of their own cares and losses they ministered to the wants of their sick, wounded, or otherwise helpless charges, with a noble cheerfulness and a patient zeal that fully warranted the respectful praises which Colonel Inglis loved officially to utter, and which Lord Canning afterwards hastened yet more publicly to repeat.* "The honoured names of Birch, of Polehampton, of Barbor, and of Gall" are linked with the heroic defence of Lucknow as imperishably as that of Florence Nightingale with the deeds and sufferings of our troops in the Crimea.

Round the straggling, rudely fortified lines that enclosed the

* Trotter; Kaye; Staff Officer; Rees' "Narrative"; Gubbins; Official Papers, &c.

Residency and a number of adjacent buildings the enemy were soon firing from twenty-five guns, many of great bore, so placed that no part of the enclosure above ground escaped suffering from shot or shell. There was no safety even for the sick and wounded in the hospital. Some of the guns were only fifty yards from our own outworks. Screened in various ways from the fire of musketry and even of mortars, the rebel gunners could do their worst upon the besieged, while from houses within pistol-shot of our barricades swarms of sharpshooters kept up a galling, an incessant rain of bullets. Other parties relieved each other at the work of mining a way into the battered stronghold. On the 20th of July a general assault was preluded by the springing of a mine inside the Water Gate near the Redan. Four hours long a fierce battle raged at almost every outpost in turn. But by two P.M. the assailants, driven everywhere back with heavy slaughter, returned to their usual modes of harassing the besieged.

For the next three weeks they sought to weary out the garrison with a ceaseless fire of arms, great and small, varied by frequent alarms, while fresh mines were digging for the destruction of our people. Again, on the 10th of August, was trial made of a grand assault, preceded by the bursting of a mine, which caused a clear breach of twenty feet in the defences close to the Brigade Mess. Through that breach, wrote Inglis, "a regiment could have advanced in perfect order." Again, however, after brief show of headlong courage, were the stormers driven back before a raking fire of musketry from the imperilled post. The same fate speedily befell other parties who thought to catch the garrison asleep elsewhere. Eight days later another mine was sprung in front of the Sikh lines, beneath whose wrecks eleven of our men lay hopelessly buried owing to a deadly fire from loopholes only ten yards off. The assault that followed was speedily repulsed; the enemy were soon driven from their temporary lodgement in a corner of the Sikh lines; and before nightfall a successful sally, headed by Fulton, had cleared or destroyed the neighbouring houses and put a stop to the digging of another mine.

Another sally on the 20th of August followed up the springing of a mine which Captain Fulton had driven under one of the houses which gave most annoyance to the besieged. A great many rebels were killed by the explosion. The rest were then driven out of the houses, which Fulton's party proceeded to blow up, while another, led by M'Cabe, the Multán hero, spiked two of the enemy's largest guns. During the next fortnight things went

on in their old course. Now and again a mine driven by the enemy was spoiled by a timely countermine. Day by day the hail of shells, roundshot, bullets, beat down upon the lonely garrison with the steadiness of a tropical rainfall, thinning their numbers, searching out their safe corners, and using up their strength in the work of repairing damage done. Cholera, small-pox, epidemic fevers, never ceased from among them. The children especially were dying off from disease, from scanty or unwholesome food; while even the strongest men were pulled down by a kind of eruptive low fever, out of whose weakening clutches they never, during the siege, could shake themselves quite clear. Every room was black with flies. Chief among those who had already fallen by roundshot or bullet was Major Banks, the brave, cool-headed, and able officer whom Lawrence himself had named as his successor in the civil government of Oudh.

There were other things to try the mettle of the men whom Inglis virtually commanded throughout the siege. They had heard of the massacres at Cawnpore; they knew from the first that English soldiers were fighting their way up country from Allahábád. After a long silence came, on the 26th of July, the news that Havelock had begun his march from Cawnpore and would be with them in a few days. But the days passed, and still no signs of coming help cheered the watchers peering out into the darkness for the light that never shone. For five weeks more a thick veil of silence hung between the Residency and the outer world. At last, on the 29th of August, one messenger out of several sent forth brought back a letter accounting for the past delay, and assuring the garrison of their deliverance in three weeks more. On the hopes thus rekindled by the faithful spy Angad they had to keep up their hearts until the 22nd of September, when fresh tidings came in from the camp of Outram and Havelock, then but a short march from their destined goal.

During that last interval the enemy made one furious effort to crush out the defence so stubbornly prolonged. On the 5th of September three mines sprung within a few minutes of each other sounded the signal for a grand assault. Advancing boldly under a sweeping fire from our guns, the storming columns got some of their ladders planted here and there against the walls. For a moment some of the assailants stood on an embrasure in Apthorp's battery. But the hand-grenades and the musketry soon proved too much for them. Another body scrambling forward to the Brigade Mess got so thinned by the fire of our unerring marks-

men that they too presently turned and fled, paying for their rashness with nearly a hundred lives. From the Baillie Guard, from Innes's outpost, from several other points of attack the enemy were driven back with heavy slaughter. The besieged on the other hand had suffered very little either from the mines, which all burst short, or from the sharp, hour-long struggle around their works. Thenceforth to the end of the siege they were no more troubled by grand attacks in force.*

From Lucknow the story returns to Havelock and his little army encamped on the heights of Mangalwár. On the 29th of July Havelock began his onward march to Lucknow. Five miles in his front, at Onau, the enemy, strongly posted, with a swamp on either flank, were waiting to turn him back. Two short, but very sharp, fights in one forenoon ended in the retreat of some twelve thousand rebels, and the capture of fifteen guns, which, for want of carriage, had to be destroyed. After halting to rest and take their meal under a scorching sun, our troops pushed on for six miles to Bashiratganj, a walled village begirt with swamps and water, the road through which was guarded by an earthwork holding four guns. A flank movement of the 64th Foot through the wet ground to the right of the village threatened to cut off the enemy's retreat. Attacking them in front at the right moment with his Highlanders and "Blue-caps"—another nickname for the Madras Fusiliers—the British general drove the enemy from the village with the loss of all their guns. For want of cavalry he could do no more than hold the ground he had won: for want of gunners and horses he had to spike or burst all the guns that day captured from the beaten, but still powerful, foe. On the night of the 30th, to the sorrowful amazement of his eager troops, he marched them back to Mangalwár. Besides eighty-eight men killed or wounded in that day's fighting, nearly as many were laid low from sunstroke, dysentery, and cholera. A strong body of the Nána's troops threatened his flank and rear. His means of carriage for the sick and wounded were used up already. Between him and the Lucknow garrison lay a deep river and a canal, thirty-six miles of wet road, and two miles of streets, through which the remnant of his diminishing force might fail in carving their desperate way. Without another battery and a thousand more British bayonets it was impossible, Havelock wrote to Neill, to "do anything for the real advantage of Lucknow."

* Trotter; Kaye; Malleson; Official Papers, &c.

Havelock, in truth, had begun to discover the mistake he made, under a generous impulse, in advancing from Cawnpore with a force unequal to the work demanded of it. Two barren victories were all he had to show against the untoward issues of a movement which no amount of courage or good generalship could in such circumstances have carried through. By helping Neill to confront the dangers that beset him on the right bank of the Ganges, he would have done his country better service at less outlay of precious lives. To save our people at Lucknow from imminent destruction was the only excuse for Havelock's rash advance. And even that was now wanting, for he had already learned from Inglis's messengers that the garrison were well supplied with provisions for a long siege.

Havelock, however, was still bent on doing something in aid of his beleaguered countrymen. His presence beyond the Ganges might still draw large numbers of the enemy away from Lucknow itself. In exchange for his sick and wounded, Neill sent over to him every soldier he could spare, besides three guns of Olpherts' battery and two heavy guns. With a force thus raised to fourteen hundred men and thirteen guns, Havelock, on the 4th of August, marched again to Onau. Next day, by one of those flank movements which commonly disconcert an Eastern commander, he drove the enemy out of Bashiratganj with heavy slaughter and the loss of two guns. Once more the want of cavalry marred the fulness of his success. That night cholera raged anew in the British camp. Once more, on the morrow, our disappointed soldiers retraced their steps to Mangalwár.

A third time, on the 11th, they marched forward to meet a body of Pandies coming down from Nawábganj. Halting for the night by Onau, they had next day to face an army, ten or twelve thousand strong, posted about the old battle-field of Bashiratganj. Another of those splendid victories which bore no solid fruit was followed by a third retreat, on the morrow, to Mangalwár. One purpose, indeed, the victory was to serve; Havelock could now recross the Ganges unassailed in his rear. Driven to this move by sickness, and the growing exhaustion of his troops, of whom more than three hundred were already disabled by wounds or disease, Havelock, on the 13th of August, saw the last of his brave soldiers safely landed at Cawnpore. By that time Neill himself, who had railed at his senior for falling back on Mangalwár, was beginning to admit the need of temporary rest and nursing for the men who had won so many victories to such little purpose. They were not,

he owned, in a fit state to advance upon Lucknow until more troops came up to their aid.*

Little rest, however, could be theirs so long as bodies of armed rebels kept hovering around their camp. On the 15th Neill, with a few companies of his "Blue-caps," attacked and routed one body of mutineers near the former battle-field of Cawnpore. The next day Havelock himself, with some thirteen hundred men and fourteen guns, attacked the Nána's main army, drawn up in triple line before Bithúr. An hour's hard fighting proved the stubbornness of the enemy's stand behind their breastworks under a tremendous cannonade, and forced Havelock to settle matters at point of bayonet. Post after post was carried in daring style, chiefly by the Highlanders and Fusiliers; a deep stream having delayed the progress of their comrades in the left wing. A little later the whole force was in keen pursuit of a routed foe. Beyond Bithúr, however, the weariness of the victors, their want of cavalry,—they had but sixty mounted volunteers—and the dreadful heat, gave the enemy a rest from further havoc. Their captured guns, only two in all, and a great many dead, attested the prowess of our troops, whose own loss, in killed and wounded, was under sixty, besides a dozen struck down by the sun. But for his weakness in cavalry, wrote Havelock, "not a rebel or mutineer would have reached Sheorájpur alive."†

Among the troops who had that day fought so stubbornly against us, on one occasion even crossing bayonets, were several hundred mutinous Sepoys of the 31st and 42nd Regiments, lately arrived from Ságar, the chief military post in the highlands watered by the Narbadda, south of Bundalkhand. That station happily possessed a fort, in which about three hundred Europeans had found safe shelter during the troubles and alarms of June and July. Colonel Sage, the Brigadier in command, had no faith in the loyalty of his Sepoys, and the event, in some measure, bore out his unbelief. In the early part of July the bulk of the 31st proved their right to be accounted trustworthy in a gallant fight with the 3rd Irregulars and the 42nd, who were driven out of Ságar with very little help from our countrymen in the fort. But for Sage's excessive caution, few of the defeated rebels would have escaped to strengthen the hands of our enemies elsewhere.‡

On the 17th of August Havelock led his troops back to Cawnpore. Thenceforth nothing remained for the winners of nine fights in

* Trotter; Marshman; Malleson. † Marshman; Trotter; Malleson.
‡ Chambers; Malleson.

five toilsome weeks but to rest upon their arms, pending the arrival of fresh succours. "An advance now," wrote Neill, "with reduced numbers, and those nearly used up from exposure and fatigue, would be madness." With five hundred non-effectives, and two hundred required for detached duties, Havelock, by the 20th of August, could have brought only seven hundred good soldiers into the field. Eighteen guns, six of which were heavy, he would soon have ready for service; but he wanted more officers, more artillerymen, more infantry. With two thousand British soldiers nothing, he declared, could stand before him. He was "ready to fight anything;" but a battle lost would be a heavy blow to the State, and with only seven hundred men to face thousands of Gwáliár Regulars with a strong artillery, besides swarms of rebels all around him, he could but "hope for success" in holding his ground at Cawnpore. In short, if fresh troops did not come up speedily, Havelock, on the 21st, assured Sir Colin Campbell, the new Commander-in-Chief, that, "rather than bear a defenceless intrenchment," he would "retire at once towards Allahábád."*

There was much in the circumstances of that time to account for Havelock's desponding tone. He had just learned through the *Calcutta Gazette* that Sir James Outram had been invested with the chief military command of the Cawnpore Division. His brave soldiers were dying fast of cholera and other diseases, to which the reaction from so long and heavy a strain of mind and body rendered them an easy prey. And the succours for which he had asked so often, which had, indeed, been sent off from Calcutta before the end of June, had been diverted on their upward way by the fruits of Lloyd's blundering policy at Dánápur. From the first that officer had steadily resisted all proposals for disarming the three native regiments under his command, and the Government unwisely left him free to act as he might think best. Mutiny and disaffection grew rife around him; but no warning from the bold Commissioner of Patna, no complaints from the merchants of Calcutta alarmed for their property in Tirhút, aroused him to the need of using promptly the new weapon which Lord Canning had placed in his hands. Even when the main body of the 5th Fusiliers lay in the river off Dánápur, he declined so safe an opportunity for disarming his Sepoys.

Two days later, on the 24th of July, two companies of the 37th

* Trotter; Malleson; Official Papers.

Foot from Ceylon reached Dánápur on their way up country. Then at last General Lloyd determined to deprive his Sepoys, not of their arms, but only of their percussion caps. The men of the 37th were landed, and next morning the whole of the European troops were paraded in the barrack-square, while two carts were employed in bringing the cap-cases from the magazine to the European lines, amidst clear expressions of angry feeling from many a Sepoy looking on. Nothing but the soothing words of their own officers kept one regiment (the 7th) from open mutiny.

Not content with his good fortune, Lloyd ordered a parade of the native regiments, each on its own ground, for one o'clock, for the purpose of collecting the caps that might still remain in the Sepoys' pouches. As soon as the men were paraded the native officers were sent round to collect the caps. This became the signal for an open mutiny, in which all three regiments were soon involved. No resistance was offered to the mutineers, for the English troops were eating their dinners, and Lloyd himself, being very gouty and having no horse at hand, had just hobbled off to take his luncheon on board a river-steamer. Then was seen the wondrous spectacle of two thousand Sepoys defiantly marching off with their arms and cartridges in the face of nearly a thousand British soldiers and a battery of horsed guns. Not an officer on the spot dared to act upon his own judgement in the absence of his official chief. When our troops at last received the order to advance, the mutineers were already beyond reach, on their way across the Són into the neighbouring district of Shahábád.

Even then a prompt pursuit of ten miles might have ensured their destruction before they could get across the Són; but no pursuit was attempted until the evening of the 27th, when a steamer laden with a hundred and ninety men of the 37th Foot left Dánápur to steam up the Són towards Arah, the capital of Shahábád. But the steamer that night grounded on a sandbank. On the 29th another steamer, carrying one hundred and fifty of the 10th and seventy Sikhs, the whole commanded by Captain Dunbar, set out from the same place, picked up the belated men of the 37th, and landed the whole force that afternoon at a point about fifteen miles from Arah. At midnight Dunbar had nearly reached the place where a small band of Sikhs and English were holding out against forty times their number, when he himself and many of his officers and men were shot dead by a murderous volley poured into the advancing column from a dense grove of mango-trees skirting its right. From front and left the firing was

taken up. Beset on all sides by invisible foes, to whom the white jackets of our men offered an easy mark, our tired and hungry troops held together as they best could until returning daylight opened the way for an orderly retreat. But the way was long; the enemy fired at them from every thicket, mud wall, and hollow on either side of the road, and the retreat erelong became a rout. Of the four hundred who had set out from Dánápur only two hundred returned alive, and only fifty without a wound. Out of fifteen officers only three remained unhurt. Among the survivors were two volunteers from the Civil Service, Ross Mangles and O'Donnell, both of whom won the Victoria Cross for deeds of conspicuous heroism during the retreat.*

Lloyd's perverse inaction, followed by Dunbar's generous overhaste, served to neutralize all Tayler's efforts to avert disorder from Bahár. On the very day of the Dánápur mutiny the 12th Irregular Cavalry rose at Sigauli in sudden revolt, slew their commandant, the daring Major Holmes, with his wife and some other Europeans, and after sacking the treasury rode off to stir up fresh revolts elsewhere. A day or two later the aged Kúnwar Singh, a large landholder in Shahábád, who had suffered heavily through the working of our revenue courts, cast in his lot with the mutineers from Dánápur. His armed retainers swelled the insurgent force then marching on Arah, where fifteen Englishmen and fifty of Rattray's Sikhs awaited with stern composure the inevitable struggle for life or death. Aware of Dunbar's disastrous failure, and seeing small chance of safety for the outlying stations under his control, Tayler instructed the civil officers at Gáya and Muzaffarpur to fall back upon Patna with their establishments and, if possible, with the public treasure. In half-compliance with this order, the Collector of Gáya, Mr. Alonzo Money, set out from that station, leaving his treasure in charge of the police. Inspired as he rode by the bolder counsels of one of his party, Mr. Hollings, he returned the same day to his abandoned post. Four days later Mr. Money set his face towards Calcutta with the whole of the rescued treasure—some £80,000—convoyed by a guard of the 64th Foot.†

In Calcutta Mr. Money somehow came to be officially regarded as a hero for carrying thither the treasure which he had failed to bring off to Patna. Commissioner Tayler, on the other hand, who had only acted with his usual forethought in view of dangers present or prospective, incurred the censure of Lieutenant-Governor

* Kaye; Malleson. † Kaye; Malleson.

Halliday for having "apparently under the influence of a panic" ordered his subordinates to fall back on Dánápur. While Money obtained promotion and the lowest grade of the Bath, the man whose courage and foresight had kept Bahár quiet nearly to the end of July was summarily removed from his post.*

Tayler, in fact, had not foreseen that one brave officer, with 200 men, would shortly achieve an enterprise from which twice that number had just been driven back. Major Vincent Eyre, of the Bengal Artillery, had done good service at Kábul in the disastrous winter of 1841. He had been one of the Kábul prisoners. From that time no chance of earning fresh distinction crossed his path until, on the 28th of this July, he arrived with his battery at Baksár on the Ganges, not far above Dánápur. Learning that the mutineers had marched upon Arah, he resolved to rescue, if he could, his imperilled countrymen. Luckily on the following day a steamer reached Baksár, laden with 160 of the 5th Fusiliers on their way to Allahábád. Of his own authority, Eyre detained the steamer and landed the troops. He ordered their commander, Captain L'Estrange, to prepare for a march on Arah. With this little force, strengthened by fourteen mounted volunteers and thirty-four gunners to man three guns drawn by bullocks, Eyre, on the evening of the 30th, began his adventurous march of forty-eight miles.

In spite of slow bullocks and heavy roads, the little force had covered about forty miles by the morning of the 2nd of August. Eyre had already learned the sad news of Dunbar's defeat. Presently, from the woods in front of him, a bugle sounded, and thousands of the enemy were seen spreading out towards either flank. But their smoothbore muskets were no match for our guns and rifles, and Eyre soon cleared his way through the Pandies and the wood. Turning aside from a broken bridge at Bibiganj, he made for the railway embankment, along which a road ran straight into Arah. But near the embankment lay a wood, from which the rebels kept up a fire so galling that L'Estrange's skirmishers at the end of an hour began to lose ground. Twice the enemy rushing on our guns were driven back by showers of grape. At last Eyre gave the word for a general charge with the bayonet. As the Fusiliers bounded forward with closed ranks and levelled bayonets, the Sepoys turned and fled with a speed accelerated by the fire from Eyre's guns. Halting for the night beside an

* Kaye; Malleson.

unbridged torrent, the victors next morning marched unhindered into Arah.*.

It was a marvellous tale which they were the first to hear from the lips of the rescued garrison. For a whole week fifteen Europeans, one Mohammadan, and fifty Sikhs, whom Tayler had sent betimes to the aid of his own countrymen, defied the assaults and disconcerted the wiles of some 3,000 rebels thirsting for their blood. Not one of the Englishmen was a soldier by calling, while the bulk of their assailants were disciplined Sepoys. But Vicars Boyle, who planned and conducted the defence, was a railway engineer who had learned from the Sánthál rising a lesson of timely precaution against possible danger. For weeks before the Dánápur outbreak he had busied himself and amused his neighbours by fortifying and provisioning the smaller of two houses in his compound, a flat-roofed, two-storeyed building about fifty feet square. Within its loopholed walls, and behind the sandbags on its roof, the little band of resolute, well-armed defenders, headed by Herwald Wake, the magistrate of Arah, awaited on the 27th of July the first onset of mutineers fresh from the work of plunder and havoc outside.

For seven days and nights the desperate struggle of the few against the many raged on. Beaten back at the first with heavy slaughter—for every shot told upon their masses—the assailants more cautiously renewed the attack from every point of vantage near the house. On the second day, two field-pieces were brought to bear upon its walls. Every art was tried to induce the Sikhs to abandon or betray their white comrades. An attempt was made one night to smoke out the garrison by means of burning chillies; but the wind blew the smoke back upon the assailants. The same kind breeze tempered or blew away the stench of dead horses and Sepoys purposely left to rot below the defenders' walls. On the night of the 29th, the hearts of the garrison beat fast at the sounds of firing not far off; but the sounds ere long grew fainter, and their fears were shortly confirmed by the tale of a wounded Sikh who crawled up from the scene of carnage to the beleaguered post. When their stock of water ran low the faithful Sikhs dug through the floor a well eighteen feet deep, and the earth thrown up to the surface was used in strengthening the defences of the house. A successful sally won for the Englishmen a fresh supply of mutton. Under Boyle's guidance every damage was at once repaired, and the work of countermin-

* Malleson; Kaye.

ing went briskly forward. At last, on the 2nd of August, the enemy's fire slackened, and by-and-by ceased. The sounds of a distant cannonade greeted the garrison's ears. A sally after dark discovered only the abandoned guns and a tube full of powder lying close to the mouth of an all but finished mine. Next morning the sight of Eyre's victorious soldiers came to assure Wake's heroic little band that their courage, skill, and endurance had not been thrown away.*

The baffled besiegers of Arah carried off their spoils into the jungles surrounding Kúnwar Singh's stronghold of Jagdispur. Eyre resolved to rout them out of their new shelter as soon as ever he could. On the 11th of August he led out from Arah his old troops, now strengthened by 200 of the 10th Foot, 140 Sikhs, including the Arah heroes, and a small troop of volunteer horse. No sooner had Kúnwar Singh's advanced troops been forced next morning by the British fire to reveal their strength in front of Jagdispur, than the men of the 10th grew hot for an instant rush on the men who had slaughtered so many of their comrades in the ambuscade of the 29th of July. It seemed to Major Eyre unwise to hold them in. In a moment they bounded forward, drove the enemy, who would hardly look at their bayonets, in wild disorder through villages and woods, and, stoutly seconded by the rest of Eyre's force, sent the last of the rebels scattering with renewed slaughter out of Dalaur and Jagdispur. Early on the 14th Eyre pushed on about eight miles further to Jataura, and destroyed the house from which Kúnwar Singh had just fled. His chief stronghold in the victor's hands, himself hiding in the heart of a close jungle, the most of his followers disabled from doing present mischief, it only remained for Eyre and the bulk of his brave soldiers to resume their march upon Cawnpore. His "glorious little campaign," as Outram rightly phrased it, had indeed furnished "a refreshing contrast to the bungling that prevailed elsewhere."†

From all quarters, official and other, messages of praise came pouring in upon the saviour of Bahár and the deliverer of Arah. In the face of enormous difficulties, moral and physical, Eyre had proved himself a zealous patriot, a dauntless soldier, and a first-rate leader of men. Lord Canning's Government warmly thanked him and his little force for their "zeal, judgement, and

* Kaye; Malleson; Trevelyan's "Competition-Wallah"; *Friend of India* for December 9, 1858.

† Malleson; Trotter; Trevelyan.

resolution." The chivalrous Outram deemed Eyre worthy above all others of the Victoria Cross; but Sir Colin Campbell preferred to recommend him for the honour of a C.B. Dearest, perhaps, to Eyre's own heart was the tribute paid him by the Arah garrison, who on the night of the 20th of August surrounded his bed, and, after the reading of some eloquent verses by Dr. Halls, bade their deliverer farewell in "three rounds of hearty cheers."*

Before the end of August Havelock knew that the flow of reinforcements was steadily setting in towards Cawnpore. Sir Colin Campbell, who had left England at a day's notice to take the chief command in Bengal as successor to Anson, had relieved Grant of his duties on the 17th of August, and was eager to push on every spare soldier to the front. On the same day Sir James Outram had reached Dánápur. On the 18th a naval brigade of five hundred men with ten guns started from Calcutta under Captain William Peel. The monsoon rains had filled the rivers and cooled the air of Bengal. Fresh drafts of men belonging to the Cawnpore regiments were hurrying up to their appointed goal. The 5th Fusiliers and the 90th Foot were ordered on at once from Dánápur and Banáras. Other regiments were coming up the Húghli from Ceylon, the Mauritius, and the loyal presidency of Madras. On the 5th of September Outram himself led out from Allahábád one wing of a British column fourteen hundred strong. Six days later, with a hundred and fifty infantry, forty of Johnson's Irregular Horse, and two guns, Eyre contrived to scatter, almost to annihilate, some hundreds of the rebels who with four guns had raided across the Ganges from Oudh. His rear thus timely saved from annoyance, perhaps from serious danger,—for another large body of raiders fled back into Oudh before Eyre could reach them—Outram held his way into Cawnpore. By the 16th the last of their reinforcements had cheered the longing eyes of Neill and Havelock, whose own troops, thinned by disease, but refreshed by their long halt, were now burning to renew their interrupted task.†

Over the Residency the British flag still waved defiant; but the noble garrison, reduced by the 1st of September to three hundred and fifty effective white men and three hundred natives, could not, wrote Brigadier Inglis to Havelock, hold out for more than three weeks under failing rations and the never-ending drain of human life. If Havelock hoped to save them, "no time must be lost in pushing forward." No time indeed was lost by that

* Malleson's "Recreations." † Trotter; Malleson.

commander in crossing the Ganges on the third day after he and Outram had reckoned up their numbers for the coming march.

With the noble thoughtfulness that became the Bayard of India, Sir James had already issued the ever-famous Order which told his troops that their appointed leader, out of "gratitude and admiration" for Havelock's brilliant efforts in the past, would "cheerfully waive his own rank" in Havelock's favour and serve under him as a volunteer, until the first object of their common enterprise should have been achieved. Sir Colin Campbell might well declare that seldom if ever had it fallen to any Commander-in-Chief to publish and confirm so generous an order as this. The powers of Chief Commissioner in Oudh were all that Outram retained for himself pending the actual relief of Lucknow. Nor was Neill forgotten in the new arrangements. To that officer, the ablest and perhaps the most widely trusted in the whole force, was assigned the command of the first infantry brigade, which comprised some hundreds of his own glorious Blue-caps.*

Three thousand men of all arms, mostly British, with a hundred volunteer horse and eighteen guns, lay on the evening of the 20th of September between the Ganges and Mangalwár. Next morning they rushed upon the enemy, some thousands of whom were massed about the village in their front. A short fight, in which Outram headed a dashing charge of his volunteers, issued in the capture of four guns, in the slaughter of many rebels and the swift flight of the rest. Carrying on the chase with all possible energy under a pouring rain past Onau and Bashiratganj, Havelock gave the routed enemy no time to destroy the bridge over the Sai, or to carry across it more than four of their guns; the rest being either abandoned or thrown down wells. On the 22nd Havelock himself crossed the Sai. The next morning saw his soldiers marching along a road lined by swamps to attack ten or eleven thousand rebels strongly posted about the walled park and gardens of the Alambágh, the great summer-palace of the kings of Oudh. In spite of a furious fire the assailants drove the enemy before them at every turn, stormed the park and the adjacent buildings, took five guns, and chased the retreating masses to the very skirts of Lucknow. Outram's Volunteers and Johnson's Irregulars vied with each other in deeds of successful daring, charging the enemy's guns, cutting down the gunners, and driving the Pandies back to their intrenchments beyond the canal. Sixty men and officers slain or wounded was the price paid by

* Trotter; Marshman.

Havelock for a victory which placed him within arm's length, as it were, of his long-desired goal.*

That evening, as the wearied victors halted on the ground they had won, their hearts were gladdened afresh by the tidings that nearly all Delhi had fallen at last into the hands of Wilson's heroes. All that day had the war-spent garrison at the Residency been drinking in with eager ears the sounds of battle raging only about three miles off, sounds which eloquently confirmed the news brought back to Inglis by his faithful scout Angad on the night before. On the 24th those sounds waxed fainter and less frequent, for Havelock was giving his men a full day's rest before the crowning struggle against unmeasurable odds. The only close fighting done that day arose from a sudden dash of hostile cavalry upon the weakly guarded baggage in our rear. Ten or twelve of our men were slain in the first surprise, before the rear-guard had learned to distinguish foes from friends. But the attack was soon baffled by the steadiness of the 90th Foot and the timely approach of Olpherts' guns. At times throughout the day our troops were annoyed by the fire from two nine-pounders so skilfully posted and served, that Eyre's heavy guns failed to silence them before dusk.†

At length, about eight o'clock on the 25th of September, our bugles heralded the grand advance upon Lucknow. A careful reconnaissance of the day before had compelled Outram to forego his plan of marching across the Gúmti round to the northern side of the city by a road which at any other season would have been far the easiest and the least dangerous. But three days of incessant rain had made that road impassable for the guns of a force that could not wait for dry weather; and the advance was therefore ordered across the canal on the southern side, by a road the nearest to the Alambágh, but passing perilously near the strongest part of the city and the enemy's lines. In spite of a tremendous fire Neill's war-tried Fusiliers, stoutly aided by the men of the 64th and 84th Foot, by Maude's battery, and part of the 5th Fusiliers, erelong drove the enemy from a walled village across the fortified bridge that spanned the canal by the Chár-Bágh or Four Gardens; while Outram with the bulk of the 5th worked his way by the right through all obstacles to the same point. The four guns at the bridge were spiked by Neill's men. Between the bridge and the Residency lay some two miles of streets filled with armed men, and crossed by row upon row of

* Trotter; Malleson; Marshman. † Marshman; Malleson.

trenches, palisades, and other barriers to an easy advance. Instead of rushing upon almost certain death, Havelock turned to the right, leading his troops along the canal-side until they came under the fire of the Kaisarbágh, a stately palace defended by two guns and a host of infantry. Here the hardest of the fighting began. A fire of grape and musketry, under which, as Havelock said, "nothing could live," mowed down scores of brave men as they rushed across a narrow bridge that led to the shelter of some deserted buildings near the Chatar Manzil and the palace of Farid Baksh. Both these palaces were soon emptied of the foe. But now the waning daylight seemed to forbid further progress for that present through streets of houses flat-roofed and loop-holed; each house—said Havelock—forming a separate fortress.

Outram, for his part, cool-headed as well as chivalrous, would have liked to call a halt. The heavy guns, the doolies full of wounded, the baggage, and the rear-guard were still some way behind, with the enemy all around them. Five hundred yards of streets and lanes still lay between our foremost columns and the Residency. A few hours' halt at the Chatar Manzil would enable the rest of the troops with the wounded to close up; and meanwhile messages might somehow be exchanged with the beleaguered garrison. But Outram had resigned his command to Havelock; and Havelock, heedless of more prudent counsels, thought only of the dangers that beset the garrison, and of the heart-chill they might suffer even from one night's delay. The Highlanders and Gordon's Sikhs were hurled forward into the deepening twilight; Havelock and Outram foremost in braving the death that bristled from a thousand loopholes, and rained down from every roof by the way. At the head of his Blue-caps Neill pushed forward by another road through the Khás Bazaar under a murderous storm of bullets, one of which struck down that glorious leader in the very moment of success achieved.

At length the last lane was threaded, and the watchers at the Baillie Guard on the eastern side of Inglis's post sent forth a cheer which the rest of the garrison speedily caught up. "From every pit, trench, and battery,"—wrote Inglis's trusty helpmate, Captain Wilson—"from behind the sandbags piled on shattered houses, from every post still held by a few gallant spirits, rose cheer on cheer. Even from the hospital many of the wounded crawled forth to join in that glad shout of welcome to those who had come so bravely to our assistance." With a long, loud hurrah the leading column of Highlanders, headed by Outram and Have-

lock, rushed through the evening shades into a whirl of outstretched hands and joy-flashing eyes, and voices feebly emulating the shouts that each fresh band of victors sent up to heaven in their turn. For one happy moment sickness, wounds, weariness, heartache—all were forgotten. Strange hands wrung each other in familiar greeting; strange voices thrilled together with a rush of sympathy rare perhaps even between the oldest and dearest friends. The ladies with their children crowded to the porch of Dr. Fayrer's house to see Outram and Havelock enter in, and to welcome the rough-bearded warriors who pressed forward to shake the hands of their rescued countrywomen, and to catch up the children one after another in their arms. Not much too soon had the deliverers come. The garrison's food-supply was found to be far from exhausted: but two mines nearly ready for bursting had been carried into the heart of their defences, and but for the events of that 25th of September the overworked defenders of the Residency might a few days later have been destroyed.*

It was not till next morning that the bulk of our victorious soldiers made their way into the garrison lines. Not till the night of the 26th did the rear-guard which had fought its way to the Moti-Mahal palace join hands with a strong column which Colonel Robert Napier, the Chief Engineer, had led out in quest of the missing troops and guns. In the dark of the next morning those of the sick and wounded who had survived the perils of the past two days were safely lodged within Outram's lines. In those few days the British loss in killed, wounded, and missing had amounted to more than six hundred officers and men, a part of which might have been avoided had Havelock deferred for a few hours his final advance into the Residency. The rear-guard suffered heavily, and many of the sick and wounded were cut up by the beaten foe. Major Cooper's death transferred to Vincent Eyre the command of the Artillery Brigade. Havelock's son Henry, who had been foremost in every fight since the beginning of July, lived to recover from the wounds received on the 25th. Among the badly wounded was Havelock's war-loving Quarter-Master General, Colonel Tytler. In spite of the faintness caused by a wound in his arm, Outram himself never left his horse's back or his place among the foremost fighters until the goal of his efforts had been won.

Among the slain were Colonel Bazley of the Volunteers, Crump of the Madras Artillery, and, most irreparable loss of all, Brigadier-

* Marshman; Malleson; Kaye; Trotter; Wilson's "Defence of Lucknow."

General James Neill. Shot dead from an archway behind him in the very flush of victory, within a hundred yards of the British intrenchment, Neill had won for himself in the last few months a name hardly second to any which the Indian Mutinies brought before the gaze of an admiring world. In all Havelock's force no other officer, save Outram, had inspired his comrades with so deep a trust in the military leader, with so loyal a liking for the man. As Lord Canning himself averred, the great struggle "in which the best and bravest of any age or country would have been proud to bear a part," produced no leader more trustworthy, no soldier more forward, than James Neill of the Madras Fusiliers. The news of his death came upon his countrymen everywhere like a personal shock. To the men of his brigade, to his own Blue-caps, to his particular friends and intimates, it seemed as if their brightest hopes lay buried in the Lucknow graveyard with the corpse of their own especial hero.*

The Lucknow garrison had at last been succoured, after eighty-seven days of unspeakable hardship in the worst months of an Indian year. But the end of their troubles was not to be yet. On the 26th of September Sir James Outram, into whose hands Havelock had now yielded up his temporary command, found himself master of a force strong enough to hold the intrenchment and the ground adjoining, but too weak for want of carriage to escort the women, children, and disabled, safely to Cawnpore. Erelong the whole of the force which had marched out from the Alambágh was securely lodged within the circuit of the new lines which, spreading a thousand yards outside the Baillie Guard, enclosed a number of mosques, palaces, and garden-houses, but lately filled with hostile marksmen and guarded by hostile batteries. For a few days the plunder of these buildings amused the leisure and helped to vary the meals of Outram's followers. The old garrison missed the never-ending din and crash of the last three months. In comparative safety they could roam forth from their battered hiding-places to explore the damage their own arms had wrought. But if the worst of their sufferings were over, there was trouble enough in store both for them and their deliverers. Among all the men of mark and influence in Lucknow not one could Outram persuade to render him any active help against the forces of a still dominant revolt. The three hundred who had been left in charge of the Alambágh found themselves cut off from all com-

* Trotter.

munication with the inmates of the Residency. Mán Singh himself, the great Tálukdár of whose goodwill there had once been little doubt, was already enlisted among our foes. The insurgents presently swarmed with renewed vigour against the British lines, establishing a blockade which Havelock found closer than that of Jalálabád, and compelling Outram to give up all hopes of withdrawing his garrison until a new army could come up from Cawnpore.

After a few days of feasting our troops were once more learning the duty of husbanding their stores of food; for Outram's force had brought little to eat with them save the bullocks that drew the guns and the ammunition. Once more the air was alive with the rush and bursting of warlike missiles. Mines and countermines were dug in all directions under the skilful guidance of Napier and Crommelin. Strong hands were everywhere employed in throwing up new or repairing old defences; and repeated sallies thwarted the efforts of an oft-beaten but still determined foe. In the city itself a boy-king was set up by the rebel soldiery, in whose name alone would the wily Mán Singh deign to treat at all with the Chief Commissioner. Mán Singh's offer to escort the women, children, and disabled men to Cawnpore appeared to Outram more like an insult or a bravado than a mark of genuine courtesy. Anyhow it was an offer such as no Englishman of Outram's spirit, backed by two thousand resolute soldiers, could dream of accepting. So he and his brave men were fain to await the coming of a fresh force now mustering under Campbell himself to complete the good work which Outram and Havelock had begun.*

* Trotter; Chambers; Marshman.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CAMP BEFORE DELHI.

TURN we now to the central scenes of the great drama, in which even the defence of Lucknow Residency formed only a brilliant episode. It was not to the banks of the Gúmti nor of the Ganges that men looked for the crowning award of victory or defeat to the British arms. They felt that the fate of British India hung not on the issue of a rebellion, however dangerous, in Oudh, but on the courage, skill, endurance, and alertness of all who shared by deed or counsel in the great fight waging week after week and month after month round the tall red towers of insurgent Delhi. To this centre flocked the mutinous soldiery from Rohilkhand, from the plains between the Jamna and the Ganges, from Rájputána, Sirhind, the Valley of the Satlaj, from the Panjáb and the provinces south of Allahábád. To the encampment on the heights that witnessed the sudden tragedies of the 11th of May did Sir John Lawrence keep sending from time to time fresh batches of men, horses, guns, of all things needful to maintain the ascendency, and ensure at last the full triumph, of our arms. The growth of that long struggle between the men who guarded those heights and the rebels who fought from behind those towers was followed with anxious eyes by every Englishman in Upper India, and by millions of natives who either feared or hoped for the downfall of Farangi rule.

It was on the 8th of June that the heights whence the last of our countrymen had fled for safety four weeks before, were once more crowned by British troops, conquerors in a fight which had lasted several hours. In the dark of that morning Sir Henry Barnard, reinforced by Wilson's Meerut column, broke up from Alipur to dislodge the enemy from their advanced post at Badli-Sarai. Brigadier Hope-Grant, with his 9th Lancers, a troop of Jhind Horse, and ten light-horse guns, set off before the main body, in order to turn the enemy's left. The main body, over two

thousand strong, comprised two weak brigades of foot, with ten light and four heavy guns, and two squadrons of British Horse. About daybreak the enemy opened fire from some heavy guns, to which our own returned prompt answer. Showers's brigade then moved forward in steady line, under a fire which laid many a brave man low. Colonel Chester, the Adjutant-General, was shot dead. The native drivers ran away with their bullocks, and one of the tumbrils blew up. There were no signs of the missing cavalry, Graves's brigade were still some way off, and our guns failed to silence the fire of batteries covered by strong earthworks. At last the 75th Foot, having got the word to charge and take the heavy guns in front of them, rushed forward in resistless onset, stoutly seconded by the 1st Bengal Fusiliers on their right. In another moment the guns were taken, the second brigade in line with their comrades, and Hope-Grant's cavalry thundering down on the enemy's left rear. In all haste the Pandies fell back upon Delhi, leaving their camp and six heavy guns in the victors' hands.*

Barnard after brief rest pushed on in fierce pursuit. The right wing led by Brigadier Wilson fought its way through the walled gardens and other natural defences of the Sabzi-Mandi, a suburb on the north-west of Delhi. The left under Barnard himself swept leftwards through the ruined cantonments up to the well-known Ridge of the Flagstaff Tower. In spite of a heavy fire from the guns there posted, the 60th Rifles and the 2nd Bengal Fusiliers soon crowned the Ridge, and wheeling to the right under cover of a flanking fire from Money's guns, carried the now harmless battery with perfect ease. By that time Reid's sturdy Gorkhas had pushed their way up to the middle of the Ridge, while Wilson's column, bending to the left as it emerged from the Sabzi-Mandi, bore up towards the further or western end of the same heights, where stood a well-built garden-house, once tenanted by a Marátha noble called Hindu Ráo. At this spot Barnard and Wilson presently joined hands amidst a dropping fire from the beaten foe. Most of our wearied soldiers fell back to their future encampment behind the Ridge, glad to rest themselves anyhow even in the full blaze of a midday June sun. Heavy guns were brought up to Hindu Ráo's house. Between that post and the Flagstaff Tower on the left, lighter pieces were placed at intervals on picket. A picket of guns and infantry on a commanding mound guarded the right of the camp against any attack from the Sabzi-Mandi. Cavalry pickets made all safe from the left flank to the

* Trotter; Chambers; Kaye.

river, while Reid's Sarmúr Battalion, a party of Rifles, and some other infantry, held the line of the Ridge against all comers.*

Our loss in that day's fighting amounted to fifty-one killed, a hundred and thirty-two wounded, and two missing. Of the four officers slain three were on the staff. Nearly half the total loss fell to the 75th alone. Thirteen of the enemy's guns had fallen into our hands. In the hurry of their flight the rebels left many wounded on the field. But these were soon numbered with the dead; for neither then, nor many months after, was any quarter given by our countrymen to foes guilty of treason, if not of yet blacker crimes.

Barnard's troops had not rested long when the rebels opened from the city a heavy fire upon the Ridge. Large numbers of horse and foot were seen mustering as if to attack the main picket at Hindu Ráo's. Once more in the hottest of the afternoon were Barnard's soldiers standing to their arms. But the enemy had had enough of fighting for that day, and about sunset our men returned to their camp.

From that day forth for many weeks to come there was little rest for the handful of brave soldiers encamped before one side of a city seven miles round, begirt by a stone chain of alternate walls and towers twelve feet thick, outside which ran a scarped ditch twenty-five feet broad and twenty deep, while inside were ranged some scores of heavy guns and an ever-increasing host of trained Sepoys. With the bridge-spanned Jamna washing its eastern walls, still further guarded by the old island-fort of Salimgarh, with free access to all the roads east, south, and west of the many-gated city, with no lack of shot and shell nor much of powder, for all the harm wrought by Willoughby's timely daring, with every weapon of fear, pride, bigotry, ambition, arrayed in its defence, it seemed hardly possible that Delhi could be taken, or even seriously imperilled, by the strongest efforts of a few thousand soldiers fighting under every drawback of climate, sickness, overwork, delayed succours, imperfect training, and inadequate means. For the present at least Barnard could do no more than hold the ground his troops had so bravely won. For many weeks the besieging force had to play the part of the besieged. Lord Canning might talk of making short work with Delhi. Statesmen in England might dream with Mr. Vernon Smith, then President of the Board of Control, of surrounding the rebel stronghold, or with Lord Ellenborough of stopping its water-

* Trotter; Kaye; Sir H. Norman's "Narrative of the Delhi Campaign."

supply. But after the first day's experience no officer in Barnard's camp was rash enough to believe that guns which scarcely checked the enemy's fire, and soldiers far too few for the work demanded of them, could accomplish a feat hitherto reserved for the heroes of Greek fable and Mediæval romance.*

It was just possible, however, that Delhi might be won by a well-planned surprise. Four of Barnard's best officers, including Greathed of the Engineers, and the daring Hodson, already known for his "rare gift of brains,"† and presently famous as the ubiquitous leader of Hodson's Horse, were directed to draw up a plan of assault. The risk of such an attempt was fearful; but many an officer besides these four had no fear for the issue, if the attempt were made at once, before the mutineers had mustered strong within the city, while poor old Wheeler still held his ground at Cawnpore, and Henry Lawrence still kept the tide of revolt away from the neighbourhood of Lucknow. Before dawn on the 12th of June our troops had actually mustered for an assault on two of the city gates, which a party of sappers were to have burst open with bags of powder. In another hour some eighteen hundred men might have gained a footing, however treacherous, within the coveted stronghold. But one man's unreadiness marred the whole scheme. A field officer had forgotten or delayed to draw in some pickets, without whose presence at the right moment nothing could be done. Day was already breaking, and with the waning darkness waned every hope of a successful surprise. Thenceforth nothing remained for Barnard's soldiers but patience and a stout heart.‡

There was ample need for both. Day after day bodies of rebels sallied forth from city or suburbs to vex, to threaten, if they might, to overpower the British posts. Fighting, often of the hardest, happened almost daily. Hardly had Daly's splendid Corps of Guides reached camp on the 9th of June, after a march from Mardán of five hundred and eighty miles in twenty-two burning days, when it was called upon that very afternoon to aid in repelling a sharp attack on the British right at Hindu Ráo's house. Two similar assaults were beaten back on the two following days. On the 12th, their numbers strengthened by the mutinous 60th Sepoys from Rotak, the enemy began playing a yet bolder game. In the early morning one body made a sudden

* Trotter.

† Harvey Greathed's "Letters from Delhi."

‡ Trotter; Kaye; Norman; Hodson's "Letters," edited by Rev. G. Hodson

—a nearly successful—onset on the picket by the Flagstaff Tower. No sooner had the troops on the British left driven back their assailants, than those on the right had to turn out against another body of rebels, who threatened first the Hindu Ráo post, and then the picket on the neighbouring mound. This attack, however, was baffled in brilliant style by the 1st Fusiliers, who dislodged the rebels from one post after another, and sent them flying with heavy slaughter back to the walls of Delhi. From that day also a strong picket held Sir Thomas Metcalfe's ruined house, thus filling up a gap between the river and the left of the British lines.

Meanwhile the battle of the great guns went on with fitful fury between the city and the Ridge. Whenever the enemy's fire grew very troublesome, our batteries hurled back their damaging answers, and every night our mortars belched fear and havoc into the sleeping city. On the 17th a smart cannonade from the walls betokened the enemy's secret desire to divert attention from a battery building near the Idgarh Sarai, a walled enclosure on a low hill, whence a raking fire might have been turned against the Hindu Ráo post. The trick, however, was seen through betimes, and an attack that afternoon in two columns, the right under Major Tombs of the Horse Artillery, the left under Major Reid of the Gorkha regiment, ended in the capture of a gun, the destruction of a battery, a magazine, and other buildings, and the rout of many hundred mutineers.*

By this time the Delhi garrison had been strengthened by two regiments of Sepoys and a battery of field-guns from Nasirabad. As a thing of course each arrival of fresh succours, whose approach was commonly heralded by the music of a marching band, was followed a day or two later by a fresh attack on some part of the British lines. On the afternoon of the 19th a feint movement towards Barnard's front covered the march of a large body of rebels with guns round his right rear. Brigadier Hope-Grant, with four hundred of the 9th Lancers, the Guide Cavalry, and twelve light guns, trotted out to meet the enemy, then visible a mile and a half away near the Ochterlony Gardens, north-west of our camp. Some three hundred foot, mainly of the 60th Rifles and the 1st Fusiliers, hastened after him in support. A sharp engagement, continued after dark, was ended only by a desperate charge of Yule's and Daly's troopers, in which Yule himself fell mortally wounded, while Daly got badly hurt. In the darkness and the confusion our troops at one moment fired upon each other,

* Trotter; Kaye; Norman.

at another mistook foes for friends. By half-past eight, when the fight was over, three officers and seventeen men lay dead or dying, while seven officers and seventy men were more or less hurt. When Grant next morning moved out again to the scene of last night's struggle, he found it thickly strewn with dead men and horses. A nine-pounder gun was brought into camp, along with the mangled body of the brave Colonel Yule. As soon as Grant's back was turned homewards, the rebels made another show of threatening the British rear. A few of our guns, however, soon succeeded in silencing theirs: Before Wilson could bring up his tired infantry, the last of the assailants had vanished across the canal behind our right.*

A struggle yet bloodier took place on the 23rd of June. By that time fresh succours had poured into Delhi, in the shape of four native regiments, one of horse and three of foot, from Jalandhar and Philaur. A few sentences will suffice to tell how so large a body of mutineers broke away from their stations in the Panjáb. Jalandhar, outwardly quiet during May, was ripening for the outbreak of the 7th of June. In spite of warnings, remonstrances, entreaties from many sides, Brigadier Johnstone had kept up a show of trusting the perfect loyalty of his Sepoys. The treasure, which in his absence Colonel Hartley had placed under a British guard, he made over again to its former keepers. The notion of disarming men whose good faith was guaranteed by their own officers, he persisted in scouting at a time when plenty of loyal soldiers were ready to do his bidding on their suspected comrades. After the 4th Sikhs had left the station, he made up his mind to disarm the Sepoys. But it was too late. His purpose, it seems, had got wind. On the night of Sunday, the 7th of June, the 6th Cavalry, the 36th and 61st Native Infantry rose in final revolt.

Happily the native troop of horse-artillery met the blandishments of the cavalry with a shower of grape; while the retainers of the Kapurthála Rajah stood to their arms against another body of mutineers. A night of fear, uproar, confusion, of partial bloodshed and general plundering, relieved by the steadfast loyalty of a few score Sepoys who saved their officers at much risk to themselves, ended in the marching of the mutineers away towards Philaur. About three in the morning Brigadier Johnstone resolved to pursue them, but it was nearly seven before two hundred of the 8th Foot with six guns had gained the outside of Jalandhar cantonments.

* Trotter; Norman; Kaye.

By that time the mutineers were not far from Philaur, where the 3rd Sepoys wanted small inducement to exchange a half-hearted loyalty for open defection. A bold pursuit might have enabled the pursuing force to catch the rebels slowly crossing the Satlaj in three boats, a few miles above the fort into which the men of the 3rd had allowed their officers to escape unharmed. But the hours lost in the cooler morning were not to be made up in the heat of a long June day. The men were eager, but their chief was not. After a long halt a few miles out of Jalandhar, a few light guns and a few score infantry placed on gun-carriages were sent on to Philaur with a body of Panjáb horse who had ridden hard that day to help in the chase. Nothing, however, came of this move. That night, about ten o'clock, as the whole of Johnstone's force lay encamped near Philaur cantonments, the sounds of sharp firing roused the weary from their first sleep. With a hundred or so of Rothney's Sikhs, a few artillerymen and one gun, Mr. Ricketts of the Civil Service, and Lieutenant Williams, maintained for two hours a very unequal struggle against sixteen hundred of the Jalandhar mutineers who had crossed over to the Ludiána side of the Satlaj. But all their gallantry was thrown away. In the uncertain moonlight no helpful movement was attempted from Philaur through an unknown country by an over-cautious brigadier. Williams's small party had to escape destruction by falling back upon Ludiána, which the insurgents entered early the next morning. Before the evening of the 9th that station was nearly all a wreck, given over to jail-birds and bazaar scoundrels. When the pursuing force reached Ludiána at a late hour of the night, the mutineers were many miles ahead on their way to Delhi.*

Eluding the pursuit which Lawrence ordered Johnstone to keep up, the mutineers made good their retreat to Delhi before the 23rd of June. On that morning, just as a few hundred British troops from Rai were marching into Barnard's camp, a heavy fire from front and right suddenly opened against the Hindu Ráo post, while swarms of infantry lurking in Kishenganj and the Sabzi-Mandi sent out their skirmishers to worry the British right. In honour of the day, at once a native feast and the centenary of Plassy, the rebel soldiery fought hard and long. Driven back from the Mound Picket, they clung with desperate fierceness to their wonted cover in the houses and gardens of the Sabzi-Mandi. Not till after many hours of hard street-fighting under a sun which

* Trotter; Kaye; Chambers.

slew or disabled many of our bravest fellows, were the enemy finally routed out of their foremost shelter beyond the city walls. Guides, Fusiliers, Rifles, Gorkhas, even the troops which had just marched in from Rai, had to put out all their strength on this eventful day. And their task would have been yet harder, had the bridges over the canal in their right rear not been broken down the day before. As it was, our loss amounted to a hundred and sixty killed or wounded, besides a score or so knocked down by the cruel sun. It was little comfort for the victors to know that the enemy's losses by the lowest reckoning quintupled theirs, or that a hundred and fifty of the rebel dead lay where they had fallen in one spot alone.*

Thenceforth a strong picket in the Sabzi-Mandi defied the enemy's efforts to harm the British right. On the 27th of June an attack on that side, following one that failed against the British left, was easily repelled, with the loss, however, of more than sixty good men. Meanwhile, the stream of succours from the Panjáb kept flowing, little by little, into the British camp, until by the 3rd of July, 6,600 men, of whom half were English, could turn out for regular duty. Many of the sick and wounded were sent away to the healthier climate of Ambála. Once more the question of taking Delhi by sudden assault was mooted in camp, only to be once for all laid aside. In spite of many good reasons for assaying the venture, there seemed less of danger, if not more of ultimate gain, in calmly awaiting the arrival of fresh reinforcements, especially of a more powerful siege train. The heat was dreadful, now piercing into the brain as with a hot iron, now brooding heavily upon the rain-laden air. The flies swarmed everywhere, and settled in black masses upon all things eatable. But the men were in good heart, and for that present in fair health. Thanks to a well-served Commissariat, there was no lack of food and drink. So long, therefore, as Sikh policemen and the troops of loyal Rajahs could keep the roads clear from Delhi to Ambála and Firózpur, it was deemed well to let the main force of the insurrection dash itself to pieces against the sturdy defenders of the Ridge.†

One of these vain attacks came off on the last day of June. This frequent fighting had one good effect; for it served to keep up the health and spirits of our troops. During the next two days Barnard's soldiers could see the whole of the Rohilkhand mutineers filing with their guns and baggage over the bridge of

* Trotter; Norman. † Trotter; Norman; Kaye.

boats into the rebel stronghold, while the music of a Sepoy band announced the approach and probable numbers of each new reinforcement. By the 2nd of July four regiments of Sepoy foot, one of horse, and a strong battery of guns, having crossed the Ganges at Garmaktísar without let or hindrance from the Meerut garrison, had reached their camping-ground under the guns of Delhi.

As a thing of course the new-comers had to prove their loyalty to the new Moghal rule by leading the next attack upon Barnard's force. On the afternoon of the 3rd of July large bodies of Pandies poured into the suburbs and gardens on the British right. Sounds of firing in the middle of the night showed that a rebel force had marched off towards Alipur, a few miles to the rear of our lines. In the dark of the following morning a strong body of horse, foot, and guns, under Major Coke, whose bold Panjabis had been only a few hours in camp, went forth to catch the enemy on their way back. Owing, however, to the heavy swamps, the wearying heat, the superior strength or swiftness of the rebels, Coke succeeded only in recovering the booty taken from Alipur. On their homeward march his own men were attacked in their turn by a fresh body of rebels. But a bold front and steady firing soon brought them to the end of their hard day's work, overdone with heat and weariness, but showing few marks of the enemy's bullets.

On the following day—the 5th—Sir Henry Barnard succumbed to an attack of cholera, which, in a few hours, had run its fatal course. "Brave, kind-hearted, hospitable,"—wrote his deputy adjutant-general, Major Henry Norman—"it is doubtful if he had an enemy." Weakened by incessant toil, exposure, anxiety, he had all the less chance of battling out a disease which, never absent from the camp, was erelong to slay its victims in daily batches. Under his invalid successor, Major-General Reed, the chief command fell virtually for a time into the hands of Brigadier Neville Chamberlain, erewhile leader of the Movable Column in the Panjáb.*

While Barnard lay dying before Delhi, the troops at Agra were out fighting some 3,000 well-armed mutineers from Nimach, Mahidpur, and Agra itself. On the evening of the 4th of July, the Sepoys of the Kotah Contingent, which had lately been doing loyal service in the Agra district, had risen in sudden mutiny, fired at their officers, and marched off from their encampment on

* Trotter; Norman; Kaye.

the Jamna, leaving behind them a few faithful gunners and two guns. About the middle of the next day, Brigadier Polwhele led out from Agra some 500 of the 3rd Europeans, a battery of British artillery, a small troop of volunteer horse and a few volunteer infantry to attack the enemy posted about the village of Shahganj, only three miles beyond the cantonments. Had Polwhele taken good advice betimes, the advance would have been made some hours earlier against a foe less ready to meet it. His troops, however, were in good heart, eager for any chance of punishing the hated Pandies. It was nearly two o'clock when the guns of D'Oyley's battery opened a brisk fire from either flank at a range of 600 yards from the village which formed the key of the rebel position. At the end of an hour the enemy's fire had sensibly slackened. The time was come to unchain our impatient infantry and to let the volunteers do their worst. But heedless of the murmurs around him, and afraid of risking lives so precious in times so critical, the British commander refused to stir. For another hour the guns on both sides thundered on, while a hail of musketry beat down upon our unsheltered troops. The rebel horse, emboldened by the damage done to one of our guns through the explosion of a tumbril, rushed forward, only to be sent flying by a murderous volley from Riddell's Europeans. At last the latter were free to advance at the pace they loved best. A steady charge soon cleared the village; one of the enemy's guns was taken and spiked, and the rest were limbered up for a timely retreat.

Driven from the village, the rebel infantry still showed fight from behind the low mud walls of the neighbouring fields. With the help of D'Oyley's guns Riddell's infantry might have followed up their first success. But a parting shot from the enemy had just blown up another tumbril and disabled another gun. The gallant D'Oyley lay wounded to the death, and his subaltern, Pearson, found himself unable, through the loss of men and horses and the utter failure of his ammunition, to move forward a single gun. The volunteer horse, however bold and well-handled, could not work miracles against many times their number of skilled troopers. The word was therefore given to fall back upon Agra. Worried on all sides by the light horsemen from Kotah and Mahidpur, and battered by round-shot from the well-served guns of Mackenzie's mutinous troop, Polwhele's tired and thirsty soldiers marched steadily homewards, through a cantonment which some of the rebel troopers were already firing before their

own eyes and those of the dismayed watchers within the Fort.*

Forty-nine dead and ninety-two wounded was the heavy price paid for a movement begun too late and doomed to failure by the blunders that marked its course. Major Thomas of the 3rd Europeans, a brave and accomplished officer, fell in the village at the head of his infantry; D'Oyley and one of his subalterns, Lambe, died of their wounds. Seven of the volunteer horse were slain; among them M. Jourdain, the leader of a strolling French circus who had gone out with several of his company to fight for his English friends. It was easy for the Government to supersede one more unsuccessful commander; but the fruits of his blundering were less easy to do away. For two nights, some 3,000 released convicts, aided by the floating scoundreldom of Agra city, carried on the work of ruin begun by the rebel cavalry. Every building in those broad cantonments became a blackened and roofless wreck. Many a poor Christian, half-caste or Portuguese, was murdered in his own house. During the next three months more than 5,000 people of all ranks, ages, colours, nearly half of whom were able-bodied Englishmen, found their only shelter within the red stone walls of Akbar's fortress by the Jamna; sleeping in underground rooms, in open arcades, in halls of marble lined with many-coloured glass, under the marble domes of the fair Moti Masjid; and living in daily fear of a cannonade from the Gwáliár mutineers, whose savage outburst in June had driven so many homeless wanderers into the capital of the North-West.†

Once only during those weeks of strange inaction which fretted many a brave heart in the Agra garrison, was any vigorous effort made towards bridling the insurrection which had wrested from Colvin's grasp one of the fairest provinces in all India. On the 20th of August, some 200 infantry, forty or fifty gunners with three guns, thirty mounted volunteers, and a troop of Ját Horse, marched out of Agra Fort, under Major Montgomery, to establish order around Hatrás, and to rescue the Aligarh district from insurgent bands. On the 24th, Montgomery attacked and routed with heavy slaughter a large body of Mewátis, Mohammadans, and Sepoys, who had flocked to the standard of one Ghaus Mohammad Khán, self-styled vicar for the King of Delhi in those parts. The Volunteer Horse made some brilliant charges, in one of which Tandy, of the Agra Bank, was slain; while Paterson Saunders, an indigo-planter and an able journalist, escaped as by

* Trotter; Kaye; Thornhill's "Adventures." † Idem.

a miracle the death his hardihood seemed to provoke. His quick eye had discovered the weak point in the enemy's position, and the knowledge thus gained went far to ensure the final success. The brunt of the fighting took place in some walled gardens outside Aligarh, which was afterwards held by a small British garrison, while Saunders and his Volunteers kept the roads clear between that place and Agra.*

As for the Nimach and Kotah mutineers, they had meanwhile taken their turn in worrying the troops encamped before Delhi. During July these latter had little rest from fighting, watching, handling pick and spade. Bridges in the rear of camp were destroyed for a distance of several miles. An aqueduct which brought the canal water into Delhi was blown up, under the new Chief Engineer, Colonel Baird Smith, an officer equal to any need. The work of strengthening the British lines, of clearing away the old Sepoy coverts in the Sabzi-Mandi, went briskly forward in spite of the untoward dearth of skilled labour. Comparative cowards in the open field, unnerved at the very sight of a lowered bayonet, the rebels served their guns with annoying coolness, fought stubbornly behind any sort of cover, and left no means untried of circumventing their assailants. The fire from their batteries wrought frequent havoc among the guardians of the Ridge; their sorties, however sure to be baffled by British watchfulness or sheer pluck, were more than once favoured at the outset by the treachery or the bewilderment of those in camp.

One of these surprises happened on the 9th of July. About ten o'clock a hundred horsemen, emerging from their cover, made a sudden rush upon a picket of Carabineers and Horse Artillery posted to the right of the Mound Battery. Mistaken at first for some of the 9th Irregulars, whose right picket had treacherously failed to give warning of their approach, they caused a sudden panic among the raw young troopers on guard. In a moment their officer, with a few of his men, and Lieutenant Hills, with a score of his gunners, were vainly struggling against the torrent of attack which, sweeping over the two guns, poured down into the camp towards a battery guarded by a native troop of horse-artillery. In vain did the raiders call on these brave men to join their side; their only answer was to request Major Olpherts' gunners to fire through them into the enemy. In a very short time the bold assailants were driven back, leaving thirty-five of their number dead in camp. But Hills very nearly paid the price

* Trotter; Kaye.

of his self-denying effort to stay, single-handed, the rush of so many foes; and some precious blood was spilt through the treason of a regiment in which Chamberlain had too long set his trust.*

Meanwhile, from the city walls, from the batteries outside, and the enclosed places in the suburbs, a heavy fire of guns and musketry was poured into the British camp. To clear out the suburbs, a strong column of foot, with Major Scott's battery, marched forth under Brigadier Chamberlain, and, after some hours' fighting through heavy rain, dislodged the Pandies from their last cover. Our men fought with their usual courage, and Scott's guns were skilfully, as well as boldly, handled. But the dense vegetation in the gardens, and the obstinate defence of several sarais, delayed the final victory, and raised the British loss to forty-one killed, a hundred and eighty-two wounded or missing. On the enemy's side more than four hundred bodies are said to have strewn the battle-field and the space beyond.

About twice that number of the foe may have fallen on the 14th, in a hard fight with Reid's picket and a column of all arms, led out by the gallant Showers. Round one advanced post, held by a party of Guides, the fight raged so fiercely that eighty rebel corpses were left upon the spot. Showers's column, supported by Reid, did their work thoroughly, chasing the Pandies within shelter of the grape fired from the city walls, and slaying, without mercy, all whom they overtook. Fifteen of our men in all were killed. Among the hundred and ninety-three hurt was the fearless Chamberlain, whose wound disabled him from active duty during the rest of the siege. This, no doubt, it was which determined General Reed to yield up his own command, on the 17th, into the stronger hands of Brigadier Wilson. On the following day, another serious attack on the Ridge batteries and the Sabzi-Mandi was easily repulsed, with a loss comparatively small.

Thwarted in one direction, the rebels turned all their energies into another. The 23rd of July saw them swarming about Ludlow Castle, a building not far from the Kashmir Gate, about half a mile from the river, and a little less from the Metcalfe picket. With the guns there planted, they opened a brisk fire on all our fore-posts, from the Metcalfe picket to Hindu Ráo's house. But the timely movements of a strong column, led by Colonel Showers, took the assailants somewhat by surprise, and forced them, after a brief resistance, to speed back into the city, guns and all.†

* Trotter; Norman. † Ibid.

A bloody repulse was all that the rebels earned by their desperate assault on the British lines during the first two days of August. A hundred and twenty-seven of their dead were counted in front of one breastwork alone, while our own troops dosed their yelling masses with grape and musketry from behind the safe shelter of their newly-strengthened works. Meanwhile, from time to time, the enemy renewed their attacks, with guns and musketry, on the Metcalfe picket. At length, on the 12th of August, a brilliant counter-move was carried out, under Brigadier Showers, by eleven hundred infantry, mainly of the 1st Fusiliers and Coke's Panjáb Rifles, with the help of the Guide Cavalry, a squadron of the 9th Lancers, and Remington's troop of Horse Artillery. A silent march in the dark brought the column up to Ludlow Castle unperceived. Then came the sudden alarm, followed by a brief exchange of musketry-fire, and one or two random shots from the rebel guns. In another moment our men were over the breastwork, bayonetting the gunners, and driving the Sepoys before them out of every room and corner of the building. The broadening daylight revealed them masters of the ground, on which the enemy had left two hundred and fifty of their dead and four of their guns. Both Showers and Coke were badly wounded, the latter in the act of spiking a gun. The victors paid for their swift success with the loss of a hundred and nine slain, hurt, or missing.*

Still bent on mischief, and fighting, as it were, with a halter round their necks, the rebels, on the 14th, sent out a body of horse and foot towards Rotak, a point commanding the roads from Hansi and Firózpur. To Hodson, the ever-watchful head of the scouting department, at once the boldest and the coolest-headed man in camp—as one who knew him well has written of him†—was entrusted the duty of looking after the raiders in our rear. With a hundred of his old comrades of the Guide Cavalry, a few of the Jhind troopers, and thirty of his own newly-raised Horse, he set forth through a land flooded with rains, and dotted with hostile villages. In a few days he and his hardy warriors had scoured the country between Delhi and Rotak, nearly annihilating one body of horsemen by a well-managed surprise, slaying some scores of rebels in various skirmishes, and routing the main body with signal slaughter through his clever show of falling back from their chosen place of defence. Rotak at length freed from armed rebels, and the whole neighbourhood overawed by his

* Trotter; Norman; Kaye. † Sir Thomas Seaton.

swiftly-daring movements, Hodson, on the 22nd, reappeared in camp with only sixteen men wounded and none slain.*

Through all those weeks of hard trial, amidst many brave and able officers in camp, the bold Lieutenant of Bengal Fusiliers had been winning for himself perhaps the foremost place in the eyes of admiring fellow-workers. Whatever faults he had, or was said to have, were all forgotten or eclipsed in the blaze of services which the most sanguine or the most envious could find no excuse for running down. Anson had made him Assistant Quarter-Master General, with power to raise a body of horse and foot for service in the Intelligence Department. From the first days of the siege Barnard looked for help and advice to Hodson as his "best man." To the best qualities of a mere fighting-man Hodson added not only a cool head and a rare gift of brains, but that moral courage which feels the full weight of responsibility without the fear. He was bold not more by nature than from a lively sense of the difficulties which boldness alone could overcome. He would run no foolish risks; but he could never forget, to use his own words, "how much we have at stake, that we have a continent in arms against us;" nor could he bear to "stand by and see what ought to be done without risking something to do it." He was always ready for any errand, however difficult or dangerous. At the head of a scouting party or of a dashing cavalry raid he had no equal, nor could any one else have made so much in so short a time out of the wild recruits whom Hodson led to victories like that of Rotak, and with whose help he saved more than one retreat of regular troops from turning into a disorderly flight. His old comrades of the Guides, who had crowded round him at their first meeting in camp, would have followed him anywhither to the death. His hands were always full of work; but his energies never flagged, and men knew that whatever he attempted would be well and thoroughly done. His strong personal influence made itself felt in all ranks of Wilson's force. "There goes that 'ere Hodson," said a drunken soldier as he cantered one day down the lines; "he's sure to be in everything; he'll get shot, I know he will, and I'd a deal rather be shot myself, we can't do without him."†

While Hodson was doing good work about Rotak, one of John Lawrence's ablest officers was infusing new vigour into the counsels of the General commanding the Delhi Force. On the 14th of August the 52nd Foot, the other wing of the 61st, Green's

* Trotter; Norman. † Hodson's Letters; H. Greathed.

Panjáb Rifles, two hundred of the Multán Horse, and Bourchier's light field-battery completed their long hot march from beyond the Satlaj, and brought to Wilson's aid more than two thousand fighting-men under a leader worth in himself a thousand more. Still young, a regimental captain who had never held a high command in the field, the fearless, high-hearted John Nicholson, whose wild Pathán subjects hailed him as a born king and were ready to worship him as a god,* had in June exchanged his civil duties for the post of Brigadier-General commanding the Movable Column in the room of Neville Chamberlain, needed elsewhere. In selecting him for such a duty over the heads of not a few seniors, Sir John Lawrence foresaw that events would amply justify his disregard of ordinary rules. Early in July Nicholson was encamped at Amritsar, when news reached him of the bloody fight at Jhilam between the mutinous 14th Sepoys and three companies of the 24th Foot, sent thither to disarm them by Lawrence himself. Seventy-six white men had been killed or wounded before their comrades, aided by the fire of three six-pounders, could drive the mutineers out of the station. About seventy of these were soon caught and executed, but many more escaped for that present unhurt.

Hardly had Nicholson on receipt of this news effected the disarming of the 59th Sepoys at Amritsar, when tidings yet more serious reached him on the 10th of July from Siálkot. In his ceaseless efforts to push on the great enterprise against Delhi, Sir John Lawrence had stripped the great cantonment on the Chináb of every soldier who might be useful elsewhere. Unhappily Brigadier Brind, a brave and able officer of artillery, refused to disarm his Sepoy garrison while British troops were yet at his command. On the 9th of July Siálkot was alarmed by sounds of firing, of confused uproar, and other tokens of a Sepoy revolt. The 9th Cavalry and the 46th Infantry had suddenly risen at the news from Jhilam; and the work of murder and pillage had already begun. There was a hurried, in most cases a successful, flight of men, women, and children to the Fort, where a hundred and fifty Sikhs kept faithful guard. But some few were shot or sabred on the way; while others hid for their lives all day in some corner of their own compounds—men with their wives and

* A body of Fakirs in Hazára devoted themselves to the worship of "Nikalsain." It was in vain that Nicholson flogged and imprisoned some of their number. Do what he would, they continued to worship him.—Raikes's "Notes on the Revolt in the North-West Provinces."

children surrounded by ruffians prowling for blood or plunder. Brind himself was struck down by a fatal bullet as he walked leisurely towards the Fort.*

That night the mutineers set off for Delhi by way of Gurdáspur. But the avenger was on their track. Having disarmed his wing of the 9th Cavalry, Nicholson hurried off from Amritsar with the 52nd Foot, about two hundred and fifty Panjábi Infantry, a few Irregular Horse, Dawes's troop of horse-artillery, and three of Bourchier's guns, to try and catch the rebels on their way to Gurdáspur. A forced march of forty-four miles, done with the help of carts and other carriage, brought all his men up to that station in less than twenty hours. Next morning, the 12th, he heard that the enemy were crossing the Rávi, nine miles off, at Trimmu Ghát. In two hours his column came within reach of the rebel force, drawn up in fighting order on the left bank of the stream. A sharp struggle, in which the Enfield rifles of the 52nd and the steady fire of our guns repaid with interest the daring charges of rebel horse and foot on all parts of the British line, ended in the headlong flight of the foe before one last sweeping rush of lowered bayonets.

Escaping with heavy slaughter across the ford, the enemy still held out on an island parted by a deep channel from the further bank. One twelve-pounder behind a breastwork commanded the ford and kept up a steady fire on Bourchier's guns. Nicholson, however, ferried his infantry across in two small boats to another part of the island, took the breastwork with a rush on the 15th, and drove into the deep water as many as got away from his avenging bayonets. Of those who were neither shot, stabbed, nor drowned, very few escaped the clutch of keen policemen and loyal country folk; not one perhaps ever found his way to Delhi.†

This piece of work thus thoroughly accomplished, Nicholson turned his face towards Delhi. Crossing the Biyás on the 25th of July, he rode into Wilson's camp on the 8th of August, six days ahead of his men. When these were all come in, our effective force before Delhi exceeded eight thousand soldiers of all arms, of whom three thousand seven hundred were British born. The sick and wounded still in camp after the removal of several hundreds to Ambála, reached the significant total of eight hundred

* Trotter; Kaye.

† Trotter; Kaye; Bourchier's "Campaign against the Bengal Sepoy Army"; Cooper.

and forty, a number destined to be nearly doubled by the illness and the skirmishing of the next two or three weeks.

In sending his best officer down to Delhi, with the bulk of his Movable Column, Sir John Lawrence deliberately staked the safety of his own province on the successful issue of the great enterprise which he had done so much to help forward. Unlike Colvin, who early in June called upon Colonel George Lawrence, the Governor-General's agent in Rájputána, to "march with all the European troops, officers, and treasure he could collect upon Agra, for the defence of that place," the great Chief Commissioner always looked beyond the well-being of the Panjáb to the needs and interests of all India. He was ready to loosen for a while his hold on one province in order that his countrymen might retain or recover all the rest. The good Ship of State should not founder, if any efforts of his might keep her afloat. Wherever help was needed, of whatever sort, in the country around Delhi, Lawrence was sure to render it, if he could. In order to set the Europeans at Meerut free for service in the field, he had sent thither a body of his new Panjábi troops. A small Irregular force, under General Van Cortlandt, had been ordered to scour and hold the country in rear of the army that guarded the Ridge. Wilson's soldiers being in sore need of men to work their guns, Lawrence looked up all the old Sikh gunners who had fought against us in 1849, and sent off three hundred of them to the British camp. A large body of Mazbi Sikhs, of the sweeper caste, were taken off work on the Bári Doáb Canal, and despatched to Delhi to serve as pioneers. A Bilúchi regiment, borrowed from Sind, was ordered in July to escort a first-class siege-train down from Firózpur. When Nicholson took command of the Movable Column, the Chief Commissioner sent his tried and trusty secretary, Major Hugh James, to act under Edwardes in Nicholson's stead, declaring that, "for his own work, he would get on with any one."* Before Nicholson began his fateful march towards Delhi, the British garrison in the Panjáb had given off nearly half its number to swell the strength of Wilson's Forlorn Hope before Delhi.

In the process of disarming the Sepoys at Ráwal-Pindi on the 7th of July, Lawrence cheerfully risked his own life to save from imminent slaughter some hundreds of armed men, made desperate by a sudden fear. Setting forth with a few attendants in front of Campbell's ready-loaded guns, he galloped after the Sepoys

* Malleson; Kaye; Brandreth's Letter in the *Times* of July 29, 1879. . .

retreating in panic disorder towards their lines. In spite of their loaded muskets and their frantic terror he rode among the fugitives, imploring them to avoid destruction by quietly yielding up their arms. For some anxious moments their fate, and his alike, trembled in the balance. At last the mutineers calmed down, listened to reason, and gave up their arms. The Chief Commissioner's timely rashness had averted from Ráwal-Pindi the disasters which, in spite of his own precautions, were to befall the stations of Jhilam and Siálkot.*

The march of Nicholson's column and of the siege-train towards Delhi was Lawrence's final answer to General Wilson's prayers for further help. The latter had plainly declared that without strong reinforcements from the Panjáb, he would have to abandon the so-called siege of Delhi, and retire to Ambála or Firózpur. There was good reason alike for Wilson's urgency, and for the misgivings about his own province which Lawrence wisely set on one side. The Panjáb was the only quarter whence reinforcements could reach the Delhi camp. Every week's delay in recovering the rebel stronghold swelled the numbers of its garrison with fresh streams of armed insurgents, and fanned into fresh life the disaffection smouldering beneath the surface even of the Panjáb. During July and August outbreaks occurred even among the disarmed Sepoys at Pesháwar and Miánmir. The Sikhs of the Mánjha, the country surrounding Amritsar and Lahór, were singularly shy of serving in the new levies. In other parts of the Panjáb men's minds waxed restless under a growing disbelief in our power to make head against the evil wind of rebellion. By the end of July the whole of our white troops in the Panjáb, including a regiment lent from Sind, barely exceeded 4,000 men; and these, still further reduced by sickness, had to keep guard over eighteen thousand Sepoys, five thousand of whom still retained their arms. So threatening, indeed, was the face of affairs, that some of Lawrence's ablest counsellors exhorted him, if need were, to let Delhi go, and gather up all his resources for the defence of his own province.†

Sooner than let Delhi go, the Chief Commissioner would have sacrificed, if not the whole Panjáb, at least so much of it as lay beyond the Indus. In case of urgent need, he would have handed over to Dost Mohammad that fruitful valley of Pesháwar which Ranjit Singh had torn away from the Afghán kingdom. To his thinking, such a measure, however galling to our national

* Brandreth. † Kaye; Malleson; Temple's Mutiny Report.

pride, might serve in the last resort to avert the greater evil of a retreat from Delhi, followed in all likelihood by a general rising in the Panjáb. To keep good English troops locked up in Pesháwar, wasting away from inaction and disease, when the lives of all Englishmen in Upper India were staked upon the issue of the protracted struggle around Delhi, seemed to Sir John a dangerous, if for the moment a necessary waste of fighting power. To entrust Pesháwar, in case of clear extremity, to the safe keeping of our staunch Afghán ally, while the English fell back behind the Indus to strengthen their hold upon the rest of the Panjáb, pending the advance of succours from Bombay and Sind, was a move which commended itself to Sir John's forecasting statesmanship, alike on military and political grounds. There was nothing, there could be nothing, of panic or despair in the suggestion thus thrown out as an alternative measure by one whose calm courage and clear-seeing steadiness of purpose never shone so brightly as in that long agony of our rule. Had things come to the worst elsewhere, it is obvious that such a move would have saved our countrymen in the Panjáb from untold disasters.*

Happily for all concerned, the need for choosing between two great evils never arose. On the 8th of August, Nicholson reached the camp before Delhi. The mere sight of his tall, stately figure, and sternly handsome face, gave new heart to the warworn defenders of the Ridge; and the subsequent arrival of his column was hailed by all as a sure precursor of the triumph yet to come. His presence alone was held to be worth a whole army. Nor was it long before his soldiership was called into brilliant play. While our troops were hopefully waiting for the heavy guns from Firózpur, a strong force of rebels, with eighteen guns, marched out from Delhi, to try and intercept the slow-moving siege-train, and its weak escort, among the swamps of Najafgarh. On the 25th of August Nicholson led out a column, about two thousand three hundred strong, sixteen hundred of whom were infantry, with sixteen guns of the troops of Tombs, Blunt and Remington, to spoil, if possible, the enemy's game. It was a trying march of sixteen or seventeen miles, over swamps and bye-roads. By four in the afternoon, his men had struggled up within reach of their destined prey. Before them, across the *jhil*, or marsh of Najafgarh, stood seven thousand rebels in long line; their left resting on the town, their right on a bridge over the swamp, while an old Sarai or

* Malleson; Trotter's "Lord Lawrence"; Kaye.

travellers' lodging-place, armed with four guns, guarded the left centre. Nine more guns were posted between the Sarai and the bridge.

Crossing the waist-deep water under a brisk fire, Nicholson's men marched steadily forward against the left and left centre of the enemy's line. While Coke's Panjáb Rifles, led by Lieutenant Lumsden, cleared the rebels out of the town, some nine hundred of the 1st Fusiliers, the 61st Foot, and Green's Panjáb Infantry, covered by the fire of fourteen light guns and flanked by a squadron each of Lancers and Guides, carried the sarai with a rush that nothing could hinder. Then changing front to its left, the advancing line swept down the enemy's uncovered flank, took the guns one after another, and drove their late defenders across the bridge. Thirteen guns and a vast heap of ordnance stores, besides other plunder, rewarded the victors' fearless onset. At the bridge itself a little more fighting took place before the Pandies could make up their minds to withdraw beyond reach of Tombs' guns.

Meanwhile a hitch occurred on the British right. Soon after the clearing of Najafgarh, Lumsden's Sikhs had to turn aside and attack a village still held by a small body of insurgents. Hopeless of escape, these fought so desperately that the men of the 61st were hurried off to Lumsden's aid. After a desperate fight in the dark, the village was taken at the price of Lumsden slain, of forty more killed or wounded. Nicholson's whole loss amounted to twenty-five killed and seventy disabled, not a heavy reckoning for a victory which stayed all further movements against Wilson's rear. Next evening the victors reappeared in camp tired and bedraggled, but conscious of great things achieved in those forty hours of toil and fighting, varied by a brief rest on the damp ground. This crushing defeat of the enemy not only clinched the fame of Nicholson as a bold and skilful captain, but secured to our troops the needful leisure for the work they had yet to accomplish. Among those who hastened to congratulate the victor was John Lawrence himself. "I wish I had the power"—he wrote—"of knighting you on the spot. It should be done."*

That same morning had witnessed a vain attack from the city on Wilson's lines, weakened by the absence of Nicholson's column. Thenceforth the tables were turned upon the foe. By the 6th of September the siege-train had come into Wilson's camp, together with the last detachment of troops that even Lawrence could spare from the Panjáb. From that day began the real siege of Dehli;

* Trotter; Norman; Kaye; Innes.

for hitherto our troops had merely held against all assailants the ground they took up three months before. For some time past great stores of fascines, gabions, sand-bags, besides plenty of ladders, platforms, and magazines, had been getting ready in the Engineers' park. From Pesháwar to Delhi every one knew how momentous an issue hung on the efforts to be made by Wilson's warriors during the next fortnight. It was, indeed, a gambler's throw which Wilson's officers urged upon their reluctant chief. Wilson was a good soldier, but the blood in his veins ran cooler than of yore, and ill-health, a scientific training, and a natural sense of responsibility, all led him to magnify the special hazards which younger men like Chamberlain, Nicholson, and Baird Smith, the Chief Engineer, deemed light in comparison with the untold dangers of delay.*

If Delhi were not soon taken at any cost it might go hard, they felt, with every Englishman in Upper India. In the great towns of the Panjáb treason was rearing its head more and more boldly, as the old belief in our power and good fortune gave place to a growing desire among the people to enlist on the winning side. At Lahór, indeed, where Lawrence had taken up his post since the middle of July, the machinery of government worked on so regularly under his own eyes as to convince the Sikhs that "we could not really be in much trouble," and to win from the neighbouring landowners some show of active sympathy with our rule.† But the general outlook from Pesháwar to Delhi and Meerut was stormy enough. Although the rising of disarmed Sepoys at Miánmir had been quenched in blood, the troopers of the disarmed 10th Cavalry at Firózpur made a desperate but vain attempt to seize the guns of a British battery on the 19th of August. On the 28th of the same month a furious outbreak of the disarmed 51st at Pesháwar provoked a terrible revenge. Out of the seven hundred who rushed at the arms of a neighbouring Sikh regiment, a hundred and fifty were cut down in the first pursuit, some four hundred prisoners were despatched by drumhead court-martial, and many others were sold as slaves by the merciless mountaineers.

To the north-west of Delhi General Cortlandt's levies had to keep always moving after fresh bands of insurgents. From Meerut up to Saháranpur the country was still a prey to bands of lawless villagers, or of armed rebels flocking round the standard of some ambitious chief. In Ambála itself an outbreak of disarmed Sepoys

* Kaye; Trotter. † Brandreth.

had been bloodily requited without wholly quenching the embers of popular disaffection. It was rumoured that the loyal Chiefs of Sirhind could no longer answer for the good behaviour of their troops. It was even whispered that our bold Sikh followers were tired of waiting for the plunder of a city which seemed no nearer taking at the end of August than in June. In the hills around Marri and in Lower Hazára the Mohammadans were actively plotting against our rule. The very date of a rising which was to involve the murder of British officers was fixed for the 10th of September, if by that time Delhi should not have fallen. Happily one of the Hazára chiefs betrayed the plot through his wife to Lady Lawrence, who had gone up to Marri when her husband started for Lahór. The timely arrest of the chief plotters spoiled their murderous game.*

Some days later, on the eventful 14th of September, Lawrence learned that all the wild tribes in the Gogaira jungles between Lahór and Multán had risen. The insurgents numbered many thousand, and their country lay near the unfriendly State of Bháwalpur, no longer ruled by Edwardes's old ally of 1848. It was midnight when the news reached Lahór. But Lawrence and his faithful Sikh aide-de-camp, old Nihál Singh, hastened forth, the one to cantonments for troops, the other into the city for carriage. Within three hours a company of British foot, with two hundred Sikh horse and three guns, were marching with all speed to the scene of danger. Their timely arrival at Gogaira one hour before the rebels, saved that station from plunder, and its few English occupants from a violent death. The first stroke thus promptly delivered gained time for the dealing of further blows at a movement which might else have spread to other districts.†

Meanwhile within the camp before Delhi all was hope, bustle, and eager preparation. British, Gorkhas, Sikhs, Patháns, vied with each other in readiness to dare the final venture. It seemed as if one heart were beating beneath all those differences of outward shape, colour, and creed. For the nonce they were all Englishmen. Within the city, on the other hand, all was doubt, discouragement, despair. The old King's last attempt to treat with his opponents had been met by Wilson with the stern assurance that Englishmen never harmed women and children. Foiled at every turn, their numbers steadily thinning, their discipline, courage, enthusiasm, alike wasted for want of leaders

* Trotter; Malleson; Kaye. † Brandreth; Malleson.

at once able and trustworthy, the rebels saw themselves at last hemmed in between the certain dangers of a prolonged defence, and the uncertain dangers of a flight they knew not whither. Their evil holiday was coming to a fit close. The bulk of their own countrymen in Delhi were sighing to be set free from the yoke of a lawless soldiery. With a kind of dogged resignation the leaders of a force still numbering twenty thousand good troops, besides some thousands of ill-trained levies, awaited the last great shock of battle with the pertinacious guardians of the Ridge.*

* Trotter; Kaye.

NOTE.

It was only "in the event of disaster at Delhi," that Sir J. Lawrence would have handed over to Dost Mohammad the charge of Pesháwar and the adjacent frontier. "I do not think," he wrote to Edwardes on June 9, "that we can hold Pesháwar and the other places also [Multán and Lahór] in the event of disaster." He was even ready, at need, to give up the Deraját. ("Life of Sir H. Edwardes.") On such a proposal the wisest might reasonably differ, and the arguments urged against it by such men as Edwardes, Nicholson, James and Cotton, were afterwards clinched by Lord Canning's message of August 7—"Hold on to Pesháwar to the last." As no disaster did happen at Delhi, the time for testing the soundness of Lawrence's contention never came.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FALL OF DELHI.

On the morning of the 8th of September the Kashmir Contingent, which Gulâb Singh's successor, Rhanbir Singh, had sent down from Jammú, marched into Wilson's camp. If their presence added little to our fighting strength, it served at any rate to attest the loyalty of the Jammú Prince in the hour of our great need. By that time had begun the real labours of a siege planned by Baird Smith, and pushed on by his trusty subaltern, Alexander Taylor, in heroic defiance of all rule and precedent. During the past night, at seven hundred yards from the Móri bastion, fronting the British right, a powerful battery had been traced out, built, and armed—on the right section with five heavy guns and a howitzer, designed to silence the said work; on the left with four guns, that would help to batter the Kashmir bastion fronting the British centre. While this battery, commanded by the daring Major James Brind, was making itself sharply felt on the night of the 8th, a second was being prepared in front of Ludlow Castle, within six hundred yards of the city, on ground which the enemy had somehow neglected to occupy. In vain next day was a heavy fire of bullets, shell, and roundshot poured into Ludlow Castle and the adjacent Kúdsia Bágh. By the night of the 10th the new battery was ready to open fire from its two wings, the left armed with nine twenty-four pounders, the right with two eighteen-pounders and seven eight-inch howitzers. Kaye and Campbell commanded each a wing. On the night of the 11th was completed a third battery for six eighteen-pounders; a true marvel of happy daring, built in the Custom House compound, within a hundred and eighty yards of the Water Bastion, under a furious fire of musketry, which the native workmen bore with unflinching coolness, stopping for a moment to place the body of a fallen comrade beside the rest of the slain, and then working on as steadily as before. This battery was commanded by Major Scott.

A fourth battery, armed with ten heavy mortars, had meanwhile been planted among the orange and lemon groves of the Kúdsia Bágh, about 250 yards from the city. This was entrusted to the charge of Major Tombs, who had already won a name in camp for tried soldiership and prompt daring. On the three batteries last-named devolved the task of battering and breaching the walls and bastions between the Water and the Kashmir Gates. Besides the ten heavy guns of the right attack, a nine-pounder battery had been placed yet more to the right, near an old temple better known as the Sammy House, in order to check any obstructive sallies from the Lahór or the Kábul Gate. On the 11th nearly all these fifty guns and mortars began pounding at the doomed stronghold. By the 12th every battery was in full play. Night and day until the morning of the 14th did the ruthless iron hail keep crashing forth from engines worked with a will by every spare gunner, aided by numerous volunteers from the horse and foot, without whose help the needful weight of fire would never have been so steadily maintained.*

The enemy on their side were far from idle. Driven from every gun in the bastions assailed, they kept up a galling fire from batteries in the open, from one of the Martello towers, from holes broken out for the purpose in the long curtain-wall between the Mori and Kashmir bastions. Our batteries on the left they worried with storms of musketry from the ramparts and from their advanced trenches. They made more than one bold if bootless sally on the works in their front, and once at least their cavalry tried hard to make some impression on the British rear. But no effort of skill or courage availed them now. In twelve hours Brind's battery reduced to utter silence the fire from the Mori bastion. In two or three days the steady fire from Kaye's, Campbell's and Scott's guns had knocked the Kashmir and Water bastions, with much of the wall between them, into heaps of crumbling ruin, while Tombs's mortars, aided by Blunt's lighter pieces, wrought their share of damage on the foe.

At length, on the evening of the 13th, four Engineer officers, Medley, Lang, Home and Greathed, stole down to examine the two main breaches visible near the Kashmir and Water bastions. Both being reported fairly fit for storming, no time was lost in acting upon that knowledge. Wilson himself might still doubt the wisdom of staking everything on "the hazard of a die," but he had now fairly yielded his own judgement to the guidance of

* Kaye; Norman; Trotter.

Baird Smith and John Nicholson, of men prepared, as Nicholson himself told John Lawrence, to disown his leadership rather than tolerate any more delay in daring the final hazard. The odds against them were fearful enough. Some three thousand of our soldiers lay sick or wounded. The strongest British regiment in camp mustered only four hundred and nine effective rank and file: with only six thousand foot—for the Jammú troops were of small account in Wilson's reckoning—the British General would have at once to guard his own lines, and to storm a great walled city which some of our own Engineers had but lately been doing their best to arm and fortify according to modern rules. Even if the breaches were carried with heavy loss, a far more desperate struggle might await the victors inside the city itself. Nevertheless the final word was spoken, the risk deliberately run by men who knew that the hour had come for daring greatly in order to avert an immense, it might be an overwhelming, disaster.*

In a stirring address to his soldiers, General Wilson had already prepared them for a speedy end to the toils and hardships they had borne so long and so cheerfully. To the mutineers, who had committed so many atrocious cruelties, he bade them give no quarter. But he exhorted them, as men and Englishmen, to spare all the women and children; as disciplined troops, to avoid straggling, and to forbear from indiscriminate plunder. By the night of the 13th all was made ready for the coming assault. To each section of the attacking force had been assigned its special part in the great venture fixed for the morrow. The first column, a thousand strong, formed from the 75th Foot, the 1st Bengal Fusiliers, and Green's Panjáb Infantry, with Nicholson for its leader, was to storm the main breach and scale the face of the Kashmir bastion, while the second column, made up to eight hundred and fifty men from the 8th Foot, the 2nd Bengal Fusiliers, and Rothney's Sikhs, was to be led by Brigadier Jones over the breach in the Water bastion. In each case a small body of the 60th Rifles was to cover the first advance. A third column, under Brigadier Campbell, numbering nine hundred and fifty men of the 52nd Foot, the Gorkhas of the Kamáon Battalion, and the 1st Panjáb Infantry, covered also by Rifles, was to rush in at the Kashmir Gate as soon as the Sappers should have burst it open. These three columns were to form the main attack, under the general direction of Nicholson himself.

A fourth column, of eight hundred and sixty Regulars from

* Norman; Trotter; Kaye.

Reid's Sarmúr Battalion, the Guide Infantry, and the spare pickets, besides several hundred of the Jammú troops, was to follow its gallant leader, Major Charles Reid, through the strong suburb of Kishnganj, and to enter the western side of the city at the Lahór Gate. Lastly, a reserve force of thirteen hundred men from the 61st Foot, the 4th Panjáb Infantry, the Bilúchi Battalion, and the Jhínd troops, which at the prayer of their faithful Rajah had received this honour for their past services, was to await, under Brigadier Longfield, the earliest moment for improving any success achieved by the columns in its front. This column would be further strengthened by the two hundred riflemen told off to cover the first advance. Brigadier Hope Grant, with six hundred sabres from the 9th Lancers and the Sikh Horse, and nine horse-artillery guns, was to check all efforts of the enemy to annoy our reserve columns by sallies from the Lahór and Ajmir Gates. During the assault there would thus remain on guard about the camp only a few hundred horse, a few score of convalescents, hardly fit for the lightest duty, and a battery or so of light guns.*

After a night of mingled hope and anxiety, of busy preparation, of brief and broken slumber, the storming columns formed up betimes for their long day's work. A double dram was served out to the troops, who stood eagerly awaiting the signal to advance. A fierce preliminary fire from the siege-batteries swept away the new defences hastily thrown up in the night and cleared the parapets for a while of armed men. At length, soon after daylight, Nicholson gave the word. The Rifles rushed forward in skirmishing order through the brushwood in their front. In a few moments the heads of the first two columns, forming the left attack, came out together from the Kúdsia Bágh and tramped steadily forward, each to its proper goal. Presently, as they neared the glacis of the moat, a furious storm of bullets burst upon them from every side. For a few minutes not a ladder could be got down into the deep ditch at the foot of the wall between the Kashmir and Water bastions. But British daring, with a Nicholson to spur it, soon forced its way through all hindrances. Sliding down the steep slope under a cruel hail of bullets, stones, and bricks, the stormers succeeded after a few failures in planting their ladders at the bottom of the scarp. Swarming up some eighteen feet of wall with the nimbleness of men whose ladder-drill had been carefully practised, they soon bore their stern faces over the breaches or into the embrasures.

* Norman; Trotter; Kaye.

At the head of one party clomb Nicholson himself, closely followed by Jacob and Greville of the 1st Fusiliers. Another, led by Herbert of the 75th, pushed its way with emulous daring up the main breach. The grenadiers of the 8th Foot carried the Water bastion under a fire which struck down two men out of three, while the rest of Greathed's regiment and Boyd's Fusiliers won their way up the breach in the neighbouring wall. A scattering of fear-stricken Pandies heralded a mighty cheer from Nicholson's and Jones's stormers, as once more the British flag waved victorious from the walls of the great rebel stronghold.*

Meanwhile the little band of Sappers, the forlorn hope of Campbell's column, went coolly forward with the powder-bags destined to blow open the Kashmir Gate. In broad daylight some of them crossed over the gaping timbers of the half-ruined drawbridge, under a shower of bullets from every loophole and from the open wicket in their front. Sergeant Carmichael and a native corporal fell dead in the act of laying the powder; a stone thrown up by a bullet struck, without disabling, Lieutenant Home. Corporal Burgess caught up the slow-match from the hands of Lieutenant Salkeld, shot badly in two places as he bent forward to fire the train. Burgess, in his turn, was laid low with a mortal wound; but a sudden flash and a loud explosion proclaimed how thoroughly he had done his errand. Sergeant Smith, who had started forward on seeing his comrade fall, had barely time to leap down into the ditch, when the gateway fell in with a mighty crash. Campbell's stormers rushed forward in answer to the call thrice sounded by Home's brave bugler. In another moment the Kashmir Gate was won; and the whole column, after forming up at the Main Guard, swept onward, past the Church, the *Delhi Gazette* Press, the Kashmir Bazaar, into the broad vista of the Chandni Chauk, or Street of Silversmiths. The Kotwáli, or police-station, soon fell into their hands; but the strength of Delhi's great mosque, the Jamma Masjid, aided by a sweeping musket-fire from the houses near it, compelled Campbell to fall leisurely back on the line of the Church and Skinner's House. Here he found himself strengthened by Longfield's reserves, which, entering by the Kashmir Gate, had cleared the rebels out of the College gardens, and gained possession of the streets and buildings adjoining the captured work. Two guns, planted in the open space around the Church, deterred the enemy from any further attempts at annoying Campbell's troops.†

* Trotter; Kaye; Norman. † Ibid.

By that time the first two columns had swept far along the ramparts to the right of the Kashmir Gate, driving the enemy before them out of every post and battery between the Kashmir Bastion and the Kábul Gate. At the Mori Bastion they encountered a resistance which nothing but the bayonet could overcome. At the Kábul Gate the victors rested awhile to re-form their disordered ranks and to congratulate each other on being still alive. From this point no further advance was that day to prove successful. While Jones's column stood fast on the ground it had so hardly won, Nicholson led his own men forward along the western ramparts in a vainly bold attempt to carry the defences of the Lahór Gate. No amount of resolute daring on the part of his officers and men, not all the fiery or reproachful words of their impatient leader, could win possession of the narrow lane where bold Major Jacob and so many of his Fusiliers were swept down by the fire from several guns and by showers of bullets aimed from the houses on either side. Carried away by his own eager, haughty spirit, Nicholson disdained the slower but safer process of working forward from house to house. He seemed to forget that even British soldiers were mortal men, who knew that all their strength and courage could not work a very miracle. As he was once more urging his men forward by voice and gesture on a hopeless task, Nicholson himself, the pride and hope of the whole army, was struck down by a bullet from an unseen foe. Wounded to death at the age of thirty-four, in the full blaze of his undying renown, he lingered in camp for nine days, long enough to know that he had not died in vain, that the last mutineer was fleeing on the 20th September far away from the stronghold which, but for his own efforts and example, might not have been taken for months to come.*

It is time to follow the fortunes of the right attack as delivered by Reid's column, with the Kashmir Contingent aiding on the extreme right. The latter force, about five hundred strong, with four guns of their own, was led by Captain Dwyer towards the Idgarh Sarai, in hopes of carrying a post so near the city walls. But the Jammú troops soon found themselves heavily outnumbered; the gun-horses were led away by their cowardly drivers, and the forward movement ended in utter defeat, with the loss of many men and all the guns. This failure on the furthest right told all the more heavily against Reid's brave infantry, because, through some mischance, the three light guns which should have

* Kaye; Trotter; Norman; Innes.

aided their advance, were left behind for want of men to serve them. Checked at every step in their progress through Kishnganj by breastworks lined with marksmen, their noble leader himself badly wounded, their thinned and shattered ranks unable to re-form under a deadly fire from thousands of the foe, Reid's warriors fell back at last upon their old posts in the Sabzi-Mandi and at Hindu Ráo's House. Europeans, Guides, and Gorkhas all fought well and suffered badly; the last-named alone losing forty out of two hundred men, ninety of whom had come out of hospital to share in that morning's fight. But for the timely help of the Bilúchi battalion, detached by Longfield to the scene of danger, one body of Guides might have been cut to pieces, and the Hindu Ráo post itself, which Reid's Gorkhas had held so stubbornly for three months past, might have fallen into the enemy's hands.*

Meanwhile Hope Grant's cavalry, covered by the guns of Tombs and Campbell, had been quietly undergoing the ordeal of a murderous fire from the Burn bastion, from a battery outside the walls, and from a host of marksmen in Kishnganj. Nothing in that day's fight could have surpassed the heroic patience with which those few hundred troopers, Sikh and English, sat still as statues or moved slowly forward under a shower of grape, canister, and bullets, which emptied scores of saddles in two hours. Watson's and Probyn's Sikhs bore that supreme test of soldiership as coolly as the hardiest of Drysdale's Lancers. Our gunners also suffered badly in their fearless efforts to subdue the enemy's fire, and to cover the retreat of Reid's infantry. In due time Grant knew that the task allotted him had been successfully achieved. The flanks of the storming columns had been effectully guarded, the rebel infantry driven back to their former shelter; while the bold artillerymen had at last the pleasure of spiking three of the guns which had most annoyed them.†

At length that day's work was virtually over, and our tired soldiers rested as they might upon the ground so hardly won from the Main Guard to the Kábul Gate. Wilson himself had already fixed his head-quarters at Skinner's House, near the Kashmir Gate; and several of his field batteries, having entered the city, had begun to shell or batter the troops and buildings within their reach. On that momentous 14th of September our success, if partial, had at least been great, although the bulk of the city with some of its

* Trotter; Norman; Kaye.

† Kaye; Trotter; Hope Grant's "Incidents of the Sepoy War."

strongest defences remained still in hostile hands. Thirty-seven guns had already been taken, and our troops had gained a footing from which no rebel force could dislodge them. Amidst the general exhaustion few doubted that the end would cap the beginning. But the beginning had cost Wilson dear. Out of five thousand troops engaged, eleven hundred and seventy in all were struck, and of that number eight officers and two hundred and eighty men lay dead.

Next morning the strife was renewed, although few of our tired infantry were fit for the work that lay before them. Vast stores of liquor had fallen into their hands, and the temptation to drink freely was not to be thwarted, until an order for destroying the remainder of the liquid poison had been rigorously carried out. Some work, however, was done that day by our engineers and gunners. Mortars were brought up to shell the city and the great palace. From the College gardens a battery opened on the latter stronghold and on the old Pathán fortress of Salimgarh, which retorted fiercely all that day. A breach was made in the Magazine, several houses were carried by storm or mining, and the line of attack was everywhere strengthened or pushed forward.*

Early on the 16th, when the troops had recovered from their fatigues and excesses, Longfield's brigade stormed the Magazine, thus placing at Wilson's disposal a hundred and seventy guns, mostly of great size. About the same time the Kishnganj suburb was found empty, saving a few guns which the enemy had left behind. During the next two days a line of advanced posts connected the Magazine on the left with the Kábul Gate, which still formed the end of the British right. Thus strengthened, the troops on the left pushed steadily forward from house to house towards the Palace and the Chandni Chauk, amidst incessant firing from batteries in front, from housetops and windows on either side. Meanwhile, on the palace and other parts of the city, a number of mortars, mostly from the Magazine, kept showering a hail so deadly that only the boldest of the rebels cared any longer to hold their ground. The rest were fast crowding out of the southern gates into the open country beyond, whither most of the peaceful citizens had already taken flight. Only a few ventured eastward across the bridge of boats, swept as it was by the fire from our guns.†

The defence indeed grew daily, hourly weaker. Under the skilful guidance of Taylor and his Engineers each brigade kept working forward from house to house, gaining one strong or useful

* Trotter; Kaye; Norman. † Ibid.

post after another with very little loss. On the evening of the 19th the Burn or Lahór Bastion, which had so long defied assault, was abandoned by its defenders. Early next morning the Lahór Gate and the Garstin Bastion fell into our hands. Hodson's horsemen, riding round by the Idgarh, pounced on the plunder of a large empty camp outside the Delhi Gate, and, pushing into the city from the south, won their way into the Jamma Masjid before a single gun or foot-soldier had come up to their aid. About the same time another body of troops, who had been waiting in the Chandni Chauk for the preluding explosion of the powder bags laid beside the Palace gate, found themselves easy masters of a stronghold tenanted only by a few fanatics and a number of wounded Sepoys. To such as these no quarter was given by men whose hearts had long been seared to any touch of pity for the murderers, real or fancied, of English women and children. Their General's order was obeyed by his troops, here and elsewhere, to the last letter, with a sternness sometimes indiscriminate, yet tempered by compassion for the weak and helpless. Wilson's white soldiers were still at least Englishmen. They were ready to bayonet a wounded rebel, or even to shoot down helpless natives in whose hands some bit of English property might be found. But of the unarmed citizens who crossed their path very few, if any, were murdered in cold blood. Some of the natives might cut the throats of their wives or daughters to forestall the cruelties natural perhaps to Eastern conquerors; but it is only fair to say that not one child or woman, even in the hottest of that week's fighting, fell by the wanton hand of a British soldier. Brind himself sent out of the city "many hundreds of women, children, and helpless male inhabitants—blind and decrepit." In the houses carried by our men were sometimes found a crowd of women and children whom the captors treated "as if they had been their sisters," helping them carefully forward on their way to the nearest gate. Amidst dark scenes of carnage, drunkenness, and plunder, consequent on the capture of a city filled with mutineers, their spoils, and the goods of wealthy tradesmen, this gleam of tender light smiles out like a peaceful sunset over a storm-clouded sea.*

Before the capture of the Palace Captain Aitkin and a few Panjábis had forced their way into the Salimgarh, spiking the guns, and carrying the gate that opened into the Palace itself. And now at last, on the 20th of September, 1857, after a momen-

* Kaye; Trotter.

tous struggle of six days, was the great stronghold of rebellion fairly won. The many-pillared Dewán-i-Khás, the marble audience-hall where, in the prime of Delhi's glory, had stood the Peacock Throne of Shah-Jahán, became the head-quarters of that noble little army whose toils, sufferings, and achievements through more than three months of incessant warfare, at the worst season of the year, form one of the most splendid passages in the history not of one nation only, but of the whole world. Besieged at first instead of besieging, with traitors plotting in their very midst and armed rebels swarming around them, Wilson's warriors had never flinched from any duty however hard, nor shrunk from meeting the fiercest onset of human foes. Knowing they had been set there to save India at any cost, they had toiled, fought, and suffered on with a cheerful trust in themselves and their appointed leaders, with hardly a murmur save at their want of power to achieve the impossible. Victorious in thirty fights against numbers often ten times their own, they had crowned their long ordeal of work, watching, and manly endurance by planting batteries within grapeshot of well-manned, heavily-armed defences, by scaling in broad daylight walls twenty-four feet high, and by clearing out a numerous and desperate foe in six days from a city where every street, almost every house, had to be won by fair fighting or steady toil. To the amazement, glad or regretful, of all Europe they had accomplished a feat of ns unmatched in the records of any nation; a feat which even they who had once dreamed of making short work with Delhi were now prompt to deck with the homage of unstinted praise. In proclaiming the fulness of his admiration for the victors in a struggle he had once too lightly rated, Lord Canning did not forget to mark how crushing a defeat the rebels had undergone upon their own ground of vantage, at the hands of an army gathered from one small part of India, "before a single soldier of the many thousands who are hastening from England to uphold the supremacy of the British power, has set foot on these shores;" and even "before the support of those battalions which have been collected in Bengal, from the forces of the Queen in China, and in her Majesty's Eastern colonies, could reach Major-General Wilson's army."*

A result so glorious could not fail to have been dearly bought. Besides many hundred dead or disabled through disease, a thousand and twelve men and officers died of wounds received between

* Trotter; Official Papers.

the 30th of May and the 20th of September, while the return of wounded and missing mounted up to two thousand eight hundred and twenty-five. Out of the whole number thus stricken in fight, as many as sixteen hundred and seventy-four were killed or wounded between the 8th of September and the day of Wilson's entry into the Palace. In some regiments, notably in the 60th Rifles, Reid's Sarmúr Gorkhas, and Daly's Guides, the loss from fighting alone was more than half their entire strength. Of the engineer officers more than two-thirds were killed or wounded in the discharge of duties not more hard than dangerous. The artillery also were heavy sufferers, and the two Fusilier regiments came not far behind the special guardians of the Ridge. Of the enemy's loss in men no reckoning was ever attempted; but more than three hundred guns and mortars fell into the conquerors' hands, and dead Sepoys were lying in heaps all about the captured city.

Still the cup of our vengeance was not quite full. Delhi's aged king, a virtual if passive traitor, and his sons, the leaders of the rebellion, had fled with a crowd of followers and kinsfolk to the great tomb of their ancestor Humayun, near the tapering tower of the Ḳutáb. Foreseeing the trouble that might ensue if the fugitives once more fell into the hands of the rebel soldiery, Hodson begged hard, for some time in vain, for leave to ride after them and bring the old king back a prisoner to his former capital. Only after much pleading was he allowed by Wilson to go forth on his dangerous errand. Followed on the 21st by fifty of his own troopers, he had to wait for two hours near the lofty gateway of Humayun's Tomb, while the king and some of his counsellors were pondering on the message brought by Hodson's envoy. At last the long discussion ended. From Hodson's own lips the wretched prisoner heard the renewal of the promises made him two hours before; and the palanquins that bore the king, his queen Zinat Mahal, and her young son Jamma Bakht, set forth under Hodson's escort on their way back to the captured city. The march thither seemed to the daring Englishman himself "the longest five miles he ever rode," going as he had to do at a foot's pace; his own handful of men surrounded and followed up to the Lahór Gate by thousands of armed and scowling natives, who might at any moment have attempted a rescue with every chance of success. At the Palace Gate Hodson made his captives over to Charles Saunders, the Civil Commissioner, for safe lodgement in their former home. Pursuing his own way to Wilson's quarters,

to report his success and to deliver up the royal arms, Hodson was greeted with the gruff remark, "Well, I'm glad you have got him, but I never expected to see either him or you again."*

After more pressing of the General, who would not yield until the dying Nicholson had roused himself to urge the need for swift and stern action, Wilson grumbled forth his leave for Hodson to go in quest of "the villain princes," who were said to have taken a leading part in the massacres of May. On the morning of the 23rd, therefore, Hodson, with his subaltern McDowell and a hundred horsemen, paid another visit to Humayun's Tomb. He had been told by Wilson "not to trouble him with any prisoners." Three of the Shahzádas or royal princes, two sons and a grandson of the captive king, at length surrendered unconditionally, in the hope, it may be, that their lives also would be spared. They were placed in a covered bullock-cart and borne away amidst the murmurs of a sullenly-yielding crowd. Inside the court of the noble building remained another crowd of armed retainers, who might have made short work of their bold visitors. But Hodson the all-daring and his brave Lieutenant rode in among them with a few score of their men. Cowed by their sudden appearance and confident bearing, some thousands of armed men quietly obeyed the order to give up their arms. Leaving a guard to follow with the arms and other booty, Hodson galloped off to look after his captives. Not far from the city-gate he saw their cart and its small escort surrounded by a sea of lowering faces and mischief-boding forms. To him it seemed as if that dense crowd were already turning upon the guard. Dashing straightway into their midst, he told the mob in a few words that "these were the butchers who had murdered and brutally used helpless women and children, and that the Government had now sent their punishment." Then, after making the princes strip off their outer garments, he seized a carbine from one of his troopers, and shot them dead one after the other, with the deliberate coolness of one who had a solemn duty to discharge. "God is great," was the answer that broke from a multitude of lips; and slowly, but quietly, the crowd melted away.†

The dead bodies, carried by Hodson's order to the Kotwáli, lay stripped of their outer garments, exposed for three days to public view on the very spot where the blood of their former victims still dyed the polished plaster of the floor. Hodson had intended to reserve the princes for the gallows, but when it "came to

* Hodson's Letters; Trotter; Kaye. † Trotter; Hodson; Kaye.

question of them or us," he wrote, "I had no time for deliberation." On a careful review of all the circumstances, it is hard to see why this deed of summary justice should have provoked the indignant censures of more than one historian. It might have been best, for certain reasons, had the slaughtered princes lived to undergo a regular trial. But Hodson had gleaned from fairly trustworthy sources evidence which convinced him of their actual guilt. He had been virtually told to deal with them as he thought fit. A man so brave and cool in any crisis was little likely to overrate the danger which threatened his small party, from a crowd of angry natives, many of whom bore arms which they had even begun to use. To shoot the princes with his own hand seemed only the natural act of one who saw the danger of a moment's delay, and scorned to shift upon other shoulders the risk or the burden of a deed best done at such a moment by himself.*

With the fall of Delhi and the capture of its puppet king our countrymen in Upper India began once more to breathe freely, after sitting as it were for months over a loaded mine which any mischance might have fired to their destruction. No wonder that, in looking back over the events of a time so critical, Sir John Lawrence owned to a feeling of sheer amazement at finding himself still alive. And while his own heart went up to Heaven in thanksgiving for his country's deliverance from deadly peril, the hearts of his countrymen swelled with gratitude to the man who at such a time had shown himself a very

> "tower of strength
> Which stood foursquare to all the winds that blew;"

the statesman whose forecast, coolness, and strong will had saved our Indian Empire to ride out the worst storm it has yet encountered. All honour to those who worked with him under him, from Edwardes at Peshâwar and Montgomery at Lahore down to the humblest private in the camp before Delhi. But without John Lawrence to guide, to inspire, to control their efforts for the common weal, to dare wisely for great ends, to make his voice heard on military as well as civil questions, to bring himself and the resources of his province on the task of crushing the rebellion in its central seat, it is almost certain that the struggle would have lasted longer and have ended far less happily.

* Hodson's men had his ear half cut off. The Prince's garments were [illegible]—(Hodson's Life and Letters.)

than it did. But for Lawrence, in short, Delhi would not have been taken in September, and what would have happened then? To him at any rate, by the concurrent verdict of Wilson's officers, of Wilson himself, of Lord Canning, of the Court of Directors, of every unbiassed Englishman in the North-West, was accorded the place of honour as "saviour of India," as the prime author of Wilson's triumph, as the man to whom, in the words of Ross Mangles, then Chairman of the India House Board, "more than to any other, more than to thousands of others, was owing the conquest of Delhi and the safety of the whole North-West."*

For services so invaluable a Grand Cross of the Bath seemed but a nominal reward; nor did the baronetcy afterwards bestowed upon him come much nearer the mark of a nation's just tribute to his pre-eminent worth. To a man, however, of Sir John's moderate desires and simple tastes the pension granted by the India House might seem a fair provision for the needs of a growing family and of his new titular rank. The leader of the force that conquered Delhi received his due share of public honour for services which compelled him to recruit his broken health in the Himalayas. A grateful Government rewarded the Lieutenant-Colonel of Bengal Artillery with a baronetcy and a knighthood, while his official masters at the India House voted him a pension of a thousand a year. A handsome pension was also granted to the widowed mother of John Nicholson, and the empty honour of a knighthood was paid to the memory of her dead hero. To other officers rewards were distributed befitting their rank and special services, but neither Home nor Salkeld lived to wear the Victoria Cross which no one had ever more richly earned. Every soldier of whatever rank in Wilson's army was allowed to reckon a year's service towards pension on account of his share in the memorable siege. Twelve months' batta paid down reconciled the troops to the loss of waiting for so much of the Dehli prize money as might remain for distribution after Sikhs, Patháns, camp-followers, and other experts in the art of plundering had carried off their precarious shares. No small part of the Dehli booty found its way to the homes of those dark-skinned warriors without whose help the Imperial City could not have been taken, nor the Panjáb preserved from revolt.

Before Wilson set his face towards the Simla Hills he had been taken not only to place the city under strict

* Mr. Mangles's Speech at Haileybury; Sir A. Wilson's Despatch; Canning's General Order; Norman.

ule, but to establish order in the surrounding country. Colonel Pelham Burn, who had joined Nicholson's storming column as a volunteer and done other soldierly service in the field, was appointed Military Governor of Delhi. On the 24th of September Colonel Edward Greathed, of the 8th Foot, led out a flying column, nearly three thousand strong, to hunt down the armed bands that armed the country between Delhi and Aligarh. Another column under Brigadier Showers went out to chastise the rebels in the adjacent district of Gurgáon. In twelve days Greathed's column had beaten the rebels wherever they made a stand, taking many guns and much plunder, burning unfriendly villages, and shattering at Málagarh the short-lived royalty of the insurgent Walidád Khán. The 6th of October saw fresh slaughter of hostile troops at Akrabád. Nor was Showers less successful on his side. Marching to and fro in chase of the flying enemy, his column in the course of a month got through a good deal of useful if not glorious work. Four or five forts, those of Kanaud and Dádar especially strong and well supplied, about sixty guns, seven or eight lakhs of rupees, and plenty of other prize fell into the active Brigadier's hands. Hodson and his bold troopers gave assist to the disaffected. The lords of Jhajar, Gurgáon, and Farrukhgarh, were sent off prisoners to Delhi, there to be tried by court-martial for acts of undoubted, if not always deliberate, treason. Some weeks later, a smaller force under Colonel Gerrard stamped out fresh bodies of rebels in the Jhajar district. Behind the flying war came up everywhere the civil officer, to plead the claims of peace and order, to rescue villages from untimely ruin, to save many a life from indiscriminate slaughter, to count the crops that still in most places promised the revenue a rich yield, and to piece together out of the wrecks of past existence something like a fair show of reascendent law.*

* Trotter; Kaye.

END OF VOL. I.

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